

HAUFF'S
TALES

translated by
THESIGER



Mamie Reid

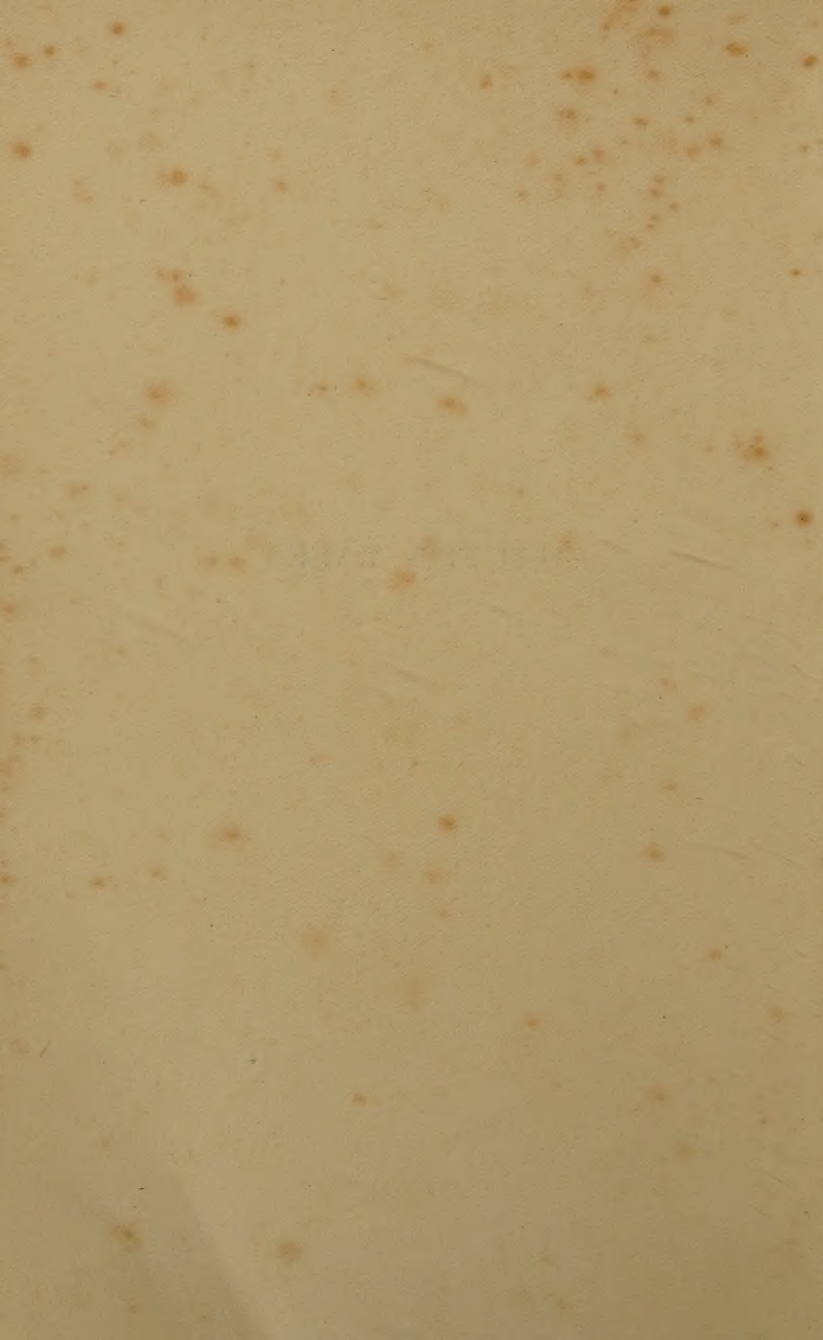
Grace Hill S. S.

1909

This Book Belongs to
Jochel Lamb

7/17

HAUFF'S TALES





THE MERCHANTS.

Frontispiece.

HAUFF'S TALES

TRANSLATED BY
SYBIL THESIGER

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
DOROTHY MORRIS

LONDON
JAMES FINCH & CO. LIMITED
33 PATERNOSTER ROW
1905

HAUTE'S TALES

JAMES FINCH & CO. LIMITED

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	PAGE vii
------------------------	-------------

THE CARAVAN

THE TALE OF CALIPH STORK	5
THE TALE OF THE SEVERED HAND	21
THE RESCUE OF FATME	43
THE TALE OF LITTLE MUCK	66
THE TALE OF THE FALSE PRINCE	90
THE HISTORY OF ORBASAN, THE ROBBER.	114

THE SHEIK OF ALEXANDRIA AND HIS SLAVES

NOSE, THE DWARF	132
ABNER, THE JEW WHO SAW NOTHING	171
THE YOUNG ENGLISHMAN	186
THE STORY OF ALMANSOR	218

THE INN IN THE SPESSART

	PAGE
THE LEGEND OF THE STAG FLORIN . . .	244
THE COLD HEART—PART I.	272
SAÏD'S FATE	305
STEENFOLL CAVE	360
THE COLD HEART—PART II.	395

INTRODUCTION

WILLIAM HAUFF was born 29th November 1802, at Stuttgart. When twenty-two years of age he became tutor to the sons of Herr von Hugel, the War Minister.

The stories in this book were written to interest and amuse his pupils, and deal entirely with Eastern tales, or with fairies, a subject on which Hauff was enthusiastic from the days when he sat, like the leaders of the caravan, in a circle in the twilight and told his sisters and their friends tales of fairies and wicked genii, of robbers and bewitched princes. His knowledge of these was founded in the main on his grandfather's old library.

His first work was published in 1826, at Stuttgart, under the title of "The Story Book for the Year 1826." He died in the following year on the 18th of November. His few other writings, including "Lichtenstein" and "Extracts from the Memoirs of Satan," being published after his death.

January 1905.

HAUFF'S TALES

THE CARAVAN

A LARGE caravan was moving slowly across the desert. Afar off over the immense plain, where sand and sky alone were to be seen, could be heard the sound of the camels' bells and the jingle of the horses' harness; a great cloud of dust arose, and when this was blown asunder by a sudden breeze the eye became dazzled by the glittering of weapons and the gleaming of bright raiment. It was thus that the caravan appeared to a man who was riding towards it from the side. He was mounted on a superb Arab covered with a tiger's skin; the dark-red trappings were hung with little silver bells; and over the animal's head waved a splendid plume of herons' feathers. The rider himself was of stately appearance, and his dress corresponded to the gorgeous caparison of his horse: a white turban, richly embroidered in gold, formed his headgear; his coat and wide trousers were of brilliant red; and a scimitar with a finely-mounted hilt hung at his side. The turban was drawn low over his face; this, and the dark eyes that flashed from under the bushy eyebrows, and the long beard that hung down under his hooked nose, gave him a bold and savage appearance. When the rider was within fifty paces or so of the caravan he spurred forward his horse, and in a few

minutes had come up with the vanguard. It was such an unusual thing to see a man traversing the desert alone that the men belonging to the escort lowered the points of their lances. Seeing himself received in so hostile a fashion, the rider called out : " What is that for ? Do you imagine that one man by himself would try to attack your caravan ? "

The men looked ashamed, and raised their weapons ; while their leader stepped forward to the stranger and asked him what he wanted of them.

" Who is the owner of the caravan ? " asked the rider.

" It does not belong to any single person," was the answer, " but to a company of merchants who are returning home from Mecca, and whom we are escorting through the desert, for travellers are often molested along the way by rabble of various kinds."

" Conduct me, then, to these merchants," said the rider.

" That is impossible just now," replied the other, " for we have to travel on without pause, and the merchants are nearly a mile behind us ; if, however, you will ride on with me until we encamp for our midday rest, I shall be able then to attend to your wishes."

The stranger made no answer, but drawing out a long pipe, which he had fastened to the saddle, began smoking in great puffs, meanwhile riding on beside the captain of the escort. The latter scarcely knew what to make of the stranger, but did not venture to ask him point-blank what his name was, and to all his skilful attempts at drawing him into conversation, with such remarks as " That is an excellent tobacco you are smoking " or " That black horse of yours steps well," he got nothing in return but a curt " Yes, yes."

At last they reached the point where they were to halt for their midday rest. The captain, having stationed his men on guard, returned to the stranger, to wait with him till the remainder of the caravan came up. Thirty camels, heavily laden, their drivers all armed, first went by ; these were followed by the five merchants to whom the caravan belonged, mounted on beautiful horses : they were mostly men of advanced age, of grave and sedate appearance, but there was one among them who seemed younger, gayer, and livelier than the rest ; finally, a large number of camels and pack-horses brought up the rear.

The tents had been pitched, and the camels and horses fastened in a circle outside. In the middle stood one large tent of blue silk cloth, and towards this the captain of the escort now conducted the stranger. On stepping within through the curtains they saw the five merchants, who, seated on cushions of cloth of gold, were being served with food and drink by black slaves.

“ Whom do you bring us here ? ” the young merchant called out ; but before the other man had time to answer the stranger said : “ I am Selim Baruch, and I come from Bagdad ; on my way to Mecca I was seized and imprisoned by a band of robbers, and only three days ago managed to escape. The great Prophet brought the sound of your camel bells to me from afar, and so it is that I have arrived in your midst. I now beg you to allow me to continue my journey in your company ; you will bestow your protection on no unworthy object, and on reaching Bagdad your kindness will be richly repaid, for I am the nephew of the Grand Vizier.”

The eldest of the merchants now spoke. “ Selim

Baruch," he said, "you are welcome to our protection ; it is a pleasure to us to be of assistance to you ; and now, before you do anything else, sit down, and eat and drink with us."

So Selim Baruch sat down, and ate and drank with the merchants. When the meal was finished, the slaves removed the dishes and drinking-vessels, and brought in long pipes and Turkish sherbet. For a long time the merchants sat without speaking, puffing out the blue clouds of smoke, and watching them as they formed into rings, broke, and finally dispersed into the air.

The young merchant at last interrupted the silence. "We have been sitting like this," he said, "either on horseback or at meals for the last three days without attempting to do anything to amuse ourselves. I begin to feel painfully affected by the monotony, for I am accustomed after my meals to be entertained with dancing or with music and singing. Can you think of nothing, my friends, wherewith we might beguile the time ?"

The four elder merchants went on with their smoking, apparently still lost in meditation, but the stranger answered : "If I may be allowed to do so, I would make a suggestion. My proposal is that at each halting-place one of us should tell a tale ; this would certainly help to lesson the tedium of our journey."

"Selim Baruch, you have spoken well," responded Achmed, the eldest of the company ; "let us all agree to this that is proposed."

"I am glad that my suggestion has pleased you," said Selim ; "and, that you may be assured that I do not make it with any idea of not taking a fair share in the story-telling, I myself will be the one to begin."

Delighted at this, the five merchants drew their seats together, and made the stranger sit in the middle ; the slaves filled up the drinking-cups, refilled the pipes, and brought in live coals to light them with.

Selim took a long pull at the sherbet to clear his voice, stroked his beard aside, and said : " Listen, then, to the tale of Caliph Stork."

THE TALE OF CALIPH STORK.

I

CALIPH CHASID of Bagdad was sitting comfortably on his sofa one beautiful afternoon ; he had slept for a little while, for the day was hot ; and now, after his short nap, he looked remarkably cheerful. He was smoking a long rosewood pipe, now and again taking a sip of coffee, which a slave poured out for him, and complacently stroking his beard as he found the taste agreeable. In short, one had only to look at the Caliph to see that he was thoroughly enjoying his ease. This was a good hour to talk with him, as he was always mild and affable, and so the Grand Vizier Mansor chose this time to pay him his daily visit. He came as usual this afternoon, but, contrary to custom, looked extremely thoughtful.

The Caliph drew his pipe a little way out of his mouth, and said : " Why are you wearing such a long face, Grand Vizier ? "

The Grand Vizier crossed his arms over his breast, bowed low before his master, and answered : " Sire, how my face looks I cannot tell, but I know that down below by the castle there is a pedlar with such beautiful

things to sell that I am beyond measure vexed at not having plenty of superfluous money to spend."

The Caliph, who for some time past had been wishing to procure his Grand Vizier a pleasure of some kind, sent one of his slaves to bring up the pedlar. The latter was a short, thick-set man, dressed in ragged clothing; he carried a box in which he had all sorts of wares, beads and rings, richly-mounted pistols, goblets, and combs. The Caliph and his Vizier examined all the wares, and finally the Caliph bought beautiful pistols for himself and Mansor, and a comb for the Vizier's wife. As the pedlar was about to fasten up his box the Caliph caught sight of a little drawer, and asked if there were yet more things in that. The man pulled out the drawer, and showed within it a box containing some darkish-looking powder, and a paper written over in curious characters which neither the Caliph nor Mansor could read.

"I got these two things one day from a merchant, who had picked them up in the street at Mecca," said the pedlar. "I do not know what they are, and you are welcome to them both for a trifle, as they are of no use to me."

The Caliph, who liked to stock his library with old manuscripts, although he could not read them himself, bought both the box and the script, and then dismissed the pedlar. But the Caliph thought that he should like to know what the writing was about, and asked the Vizier if he knew of anyone who could decipher it.

"Most gracious Lord and Master," replied the latter, "a man known as Selim the Learned lives at the Mosque, who understands all languages. Let him be sent for; he may, perhaps, know the meaning of these mysterious characters."

The learned Selim was quickly brought into the presence of the Caliph. "Selim," the latter said to him, "you are a learned man; look at this paper, and see if you are able to read it. If you can interpret the writing you will receive a new holiday robe; if not you will receive twelve boxes on the ear and five and twenty blows on the soles of the feet, for you will without reason have been called learned."

Selim bowed, and said: "Let it be as thou commandest, my Lord!" Then he took the paper, and, after examining it for some time, he exclaimed: "If it is not Latin, my Lord, you may hang me!"

"If it is Latin then let me know what is in it," ordered the Caliph.

Selim thereupon translated as follows:—"Who-soever thou art, O man, that findest this, praise Allah for his goodness. He who shall take a pinch of the powder in this box, and, so doing, say the word 'Mutabor,' will be able to transform himself into any animal he pleases, and at the same time will be able to understand the speech of animals. When he wishes to re-enter his human form he must bow himself three times towards the east, saying the same word. But let him beware of laughing after he has transformed himself, or the magic word will entirely slip from his memory, and he will remain an animal."

The Caliph was highly delighted to hear what Selim read; made him swear not to reveal the secret to anyone; and, presenting him with a handsome robe, dismissed him. Then the Caliph turned to his Grand Vizier, and said: "I call that a good bargain, Mansor! How I shall amuse myself with thinking of becoming an animal! Be here early to-morrow morning, and then we will go together into the fields, and take a pinch

of powder out of my box, and after that we can listen, and hear all that is being said in the air and in the water, in wood and field."

II

The Caliph Chasid had hardly finished his breakfast and dressed himself next morning before the Grand Vizier arrived, to accompany his master on his walk, as commanded. The Caliph stuck the box with the magic powder into his girdle, ordered his retainers to remain behind, and then started off alone with his Grand Vizier.

They passed first through the Caliph's spacious garden, but they looked about in vain for any living thing wherewith to make trial of their experiment. At last the Vizier proposed that they should walk on farther to a pond, where he had often seen many living things, especially storks, that had always attracted his attention by their solemn behaviour and continual clatter.

The Caliph agreed to this proposal, and they went together to the pond. As they drew near to it they saw a stork walking gravely backwards and forwards, looking for frogs, and now and then clattering aloud to himself; at the same time they could see another stork, far up above them in the air, sailing down towards the same spot.

"I'll bet my beard upon it, my Lord," said the Grand Vizier, "that these two long-legs are at this moment having quite a conversation with each other. How would it be if we turned ourselves into storks?"

"Well said!" answered the Caliph. "But before we do so let us once more remind ourselves how we are

to become men again. Just so ! Bow three times towards the east, and say 'Mutabor,' and I am once more Caliph and you Vizier. But for Heaven's sake remember not to laugh, or we shall be done for ! "

As the Caliph was speaking the other stork could be seen hovering over their heads and slowly descending. The Caliph quickly pulled out his box, took a good pinch of powder, handed it to the Vizier, who did the same, and then both called out " Mutabor " !

Their legs immediately dwindled and became slender and red ; the beautiful yellow slippers of the Caliph and his companion turned into storks' feet, their arms became wings, the neck stretched itself out from the shoulders and grew a yard long, the beard disappeared, and their bodies were covered with soft white feathers.

" You have got a fine bill, and no mistake, Grand Vizier," said the Caliph after he had recovered from his first astonishment. " By the beard of the Prophet I have never seen anything like it before in my life."

" I thank you most humbly," replied the Grand Vizier, bowing at the same time ; " but if I might venture to make the remark I should say that your Highness looks, if possible, more charming as a stork than as a Caliph. But come, if it so pleases you, that we may listen, and find out if we really understand stork language."

In the meanwhile the other stork had alighted, and after first trimming his feet with his bill, and setting his feathers to rights, he walked up to the first stork.

The two new storks made haste to get near them, when, to their surprise, they heard the following conversation :—

" Good morning, Mrs Longleg ; so early out in the meadow ? "

"Many thanks, dear Clapperbill! I have provided a little breakfast for myself; would you, perhaps, care for a small piece of lizard or a frog's leg?"

"I thank you extremely; but to-day I seem to have no appetite. It was for quite a different purpose that I came into the meadow, for to-day I have to dance before my father's guests, and I thought I could get a little quiet practice here."

Thereupon the young lady stork began walking about the grass, making the most extraordinary movements. The Caliph and Mansor looked on in amazement, and when at last she put herself into a picturesque attitude, standing on one foot, and gracefully waving her wings, they could neither of them any longer restrain their amusement, and they burst out into irrepressible laughter, from which it was some time before they could recover themselves. The Caliph was the first to be able to speak: "That was, indeed, a droll performance, which no money could pay for. It's a pity our laughter has frightened away the foolish things or they would certainly have given us a song!"

But now the Vizier suddenly remembered that they had been warned not to laugh while in their new forms, and he communicated his alarm to the Caliph.

"By Mecca and Medina! It will have been a bad joke for me if I have to remain a stork. Do you remember the wretched word? I cannot for the life of me think of it."

"We are to bow three times towards the east, and say 'Mu—Mu—Mu——'"

They both turned to the east, and kept on bowing till their bills nearly touched the ground; but, alas! the magic word had quite slipped from their memory, and, often as the Caliph bowed, often as the Vizier

desperately called out "Mu—Mu——" not the slightest recollection of it came back to them; and so storks they were, and storks they remained.

III

The two bewitched men went wandering through the fields, not knowing what to be about in their trouble. They could not get away from their stork skins, nor could they return into the town to make themselves known; for who would believe a stork that said he was the Caliph, and even if he were believed, would the people of Bagdad be willing to have a stork for their Caliph?

So they crept about for several days, making scanty meals of the wild fruits, which they did not find easy to eat with their long bills; they could not get up an appetite for lizards and frogs, and were afraid of spoiling their stomachs with these dainties. The only pleasure they found in their miserable condition was that they could fly, and so they often flew over the roofs of Bagdad to see what was going on there.

For a day or two they noticed signs of great commotion and distress about the streets, but on the fourth day, as they were sitting on the Caliph's palace, they saw a magnificent procession passing along in the street below. Drums and fifes were heard, and a man clad in a scarlet, gold-embroidered mantle rode along on a grandly accoutred horse, surrounded on all sides by gorgeously dressed attendants. Half Bagdad came running up behind, and everybody was shouting: "Hail, Mirza! Hail to the Lord of Bagdad!" Then the two storks on the roof of the palace exchanged glances, and the Caliph Chasid said: "Have you a

suspicion now, Grand Vizier, why I was put under this spell? This Mirza is the son of my deadly enemy, the powerful magician Kaschnur, who, in an evil hour, swore to take his revenge on me. But I do not yet give up hope. Come with me, thou faithful companion of my misfortune, and we will make our way to the tomb of the Prophet. Maybe that at that holy spot we shall be released from this spell."

They rose from the palace roof, and flew in the direction of Medina.

But flying was not such an easy matter for them, for neither of the storks had had much practice.

"O my Lord," groaned the Grand Vizier when they had been journeying for about an hour or two, "with your permission, I cannot hold out any longer; you fly much too quickly! The evening, too, is already closing in, and we should do well to be looking for a shelter for the night."

Chasid gave ear to his minister's entreaty, and, seeing in the valley below a ruin which seemed to promise them protection, they directed their course thither. The place where they now settled themselves for the night appeared to have been formerly a castle. Beautiful pillars arose among the ruins, and several of the rooms, which were still to some extent in good preservation, testified to the former splendour of the building. Chasid and his companion went up and down the passages to find a dry place for themselves. Suddenly stork Mansor stood still. "My Lord and Master," he whispered in a low voice, "if it were not too ridiculous for a Grand Vizier, and still more for a stork, to be afraid of ghosts, I should feel dreadfully uncomfortable, for I distinctly heard close to us a sound of sighing and groaning." Whereupon the

Caliph also stood still, and he too could distinctly hear a low moaning, that seemed to come rather from some human being than from an animal.

Full of curiosity, the Caliph moved forward in the direction whence the sounds proceeded; but the Vizier caught hold of his wing with his bill, beseeching him not to rush into new and unknown dangers. In vain; the Caliph, whose heart still beat bravely beneath his stork's wings, tore himself away, with the loss of a few feathers, and hurried along a dark passage. Ere long he came to a door, apparently only on the latch, from the farther side of which came unmistakable sighs and an occasional wail. He pushed open the door with his bill, but paused on the threshold, overcome with surprise. There on the floor of the dilapidated room, only dimly lighted by a small grated window, sat a large screech-owl. Big tears were rolling down out of the large round eyes, and with a hoarse voice she uttered her cries of distress from her crooked beak. When, however, she caught sight of the Caliph and his Vizier, who had meanwhile followed quietly up behind, she gave a shriek of joy. She gracefully wiped away her tears with her brown speckled wings, and to the great astonishment of the other two called out in a human voice, and in good Arabic: "Welcome, storks; I see in you a sign of my deliverance, for it was once foretold me that a great happiness would come to me through storks!"

As soon as the Caliph had recovered from his surprise he made her a bow with his long neck, and, bringing his thin feet into an elegant position, said: "Owl! I gather from your words that I may presume to look upon you as a companion in suffering. But, alas! the hope you express of obtaining deliverance

through us is a vain one ; you will yourself understand how helpless we are when you have heard our story."

The owl begged him to tell her the story, and the Caliph, thereupon, related to her that which we already know.

IV

When the Caliph had finished his tale the owl thanked him, and said : " Listen now to my history, and you will see that I am not less unhappy than you. My father is the King of India, and I, his only and unfortunate daughter, am called Lusa. The magician Kaschnur, who has bewitched you, has also plunged me into this misery. He came one day to see my father, and asked for me as a wife for his son Mirza ; but my father, who is a hot-tempered man, had him thrown downstairs. The wretch knew how to come sneaking into my neighbourhood in an assumed form ; and one day, when I had called for refreshments in my garden, he came to me, dressed as a slave, and brought me a drink, which transformed me into this horrible shape. As he carried me here, fainting with fear, he shrieked into my ears with his hideous voice : ' There you shall remain, ugly one, looked upon with derision by the very animals, until you die, or until someone of his own free will asks you, even in the frightful shape you now wear, to be his wife. So I revenge myself on you and on your proud father.'

" Many months have passed since then ; sad and lonely, I spend my days, like a hermit, within these walls, abhorred by the world, an object of aversion to the animals ; the beauties of nature are hid from me,

for I can see nothing by day, and the concealing veil only falls from my eyes when the moon is shedding her pale light upon these ruins."

The owl broke off, and again wiped her eyes with her wing, for the relation of her sorrows had once more opened the floodgates of her tears.

On hearing the Princess' tale the Caliph had become buried in deep thought. "If I am not deceived by everything," he said, "there is some secret connection between your misfortune and my own; but where shall we find the key to this riddle?"

The owl made answer; "My Lord, I also suspect this; for when I was but a child a wise woman foretold that a stork would bring me some great happiness, and it is possible that I may know how we can procure our deliverance." The Caliph was very much astonished on hearing this, and asked her what she meant. "Once every month the magician who has done us both this injury pays a visit to these ruins. Not far from this room there is a dining-hall, and there he and several of his friends make a custom of feasting. I have often watched them; they tell one another what shameful things they have done, and, perhaps, he might let out the magic word which you have forgotten."

"O dearest Princess," cried the Caliph, "tell me, when does he come, and where is the dining-hall?"

The owl did not speak for a moment or two, and then said; "Do not take it ill, but only under one condition can I tell you what you ask."

"Speak! Speak!" almost screamed the Caliph. "State what conditions you like, and I am ready to accept them."

"Well, then, I also should like to be quickly released,

but this can only be if one of you will offer me his hand."

The storks seemed somewhat taken aback at this proposal, and the Caliph made a sign to his Vizier to come outside for a moment.

"Grand Vizier," said the Caliph when they were on the other side of the door, "this is a queer piece of business, but, perhaps, you could take her."

"Indeed!" answered the latter. "And have my eyes scratched out by my wife when I get home! What is more, I am an old man; whereas you are still young, and unmarried, and therefore a more suitable wooer for a young and beautiful princess."

"That is just it," sighed the Caliph, and his wings drooped sadly as he spoke. "Who says that she is young and lovely? It is buying the cat in the bag."

They continued to argue with one another for some time; but the Caliph at last, seeing that his Vizier would even rather remain a stork than marry the owl, decided that he must himself fulfil the proposed condition. The owl was overcome with joy. She told them that they could not have chosen a better time to come, for in all probability the magicians would have their meeting there that very night.

She now left the room with the storks so as to lead them to the dining-hall. They went for some way along a dark passage, until they saw a light before them, which came through a wall partly crumbled away. On coming up to this the owl told them to stand quite still and look through the hole, and they were now able to see into the large dining-hall. It was surrounded by pillars, and gorgeously decorated, and a number of coloured lamps made it light as day; round the table was placed a sofa, upon which eight

guests were seated. The storks recognised in one of the men the pedlar who had sold them the powder; another man who sat next him asked him to relate to them his latest achievements. This he did, including among his tales that of the Caliph and his Vizier.

“What sort of a word did you give them?” asked another of the magicians.

“A good hard Latin word: ‘Mutabor.’”

When the storks, who were listening at their hole, heard this they were beside themselves with joy. They ran at such a rate on their long legs towards the door of the ruin that the owl could hardly keep up with them. Arrived there, the Caliph turned to her, and said with emotion: “Saviour of my life, and of the life of my friend, I pray you, as a token of my eternal gratitude to you for what you have done, to take me as your husband.” Then he turned himself to the east. Three times did the storks bow their long necks towards the sun, which was just then rising above the mountains: “Mutabor!” they both cried; and in a twinkling they were themselves again, and in their joy at this renewed gift of life they fell laughing and weeping into each other’s arms. But who shall describe their astonishment when they looked round! Before them they saw a beautiful lady, splendidly dressed, who smilingly held out her hand to the Caliph. “Do you recognise your owl?” she said, for it was, indeed, she. The Caliph was so enchanted with her beauty and amiability that he declared the luckiest thing that had ever happened to him was being turned into a stork.

All three now returned together to Bagdad. The Caliph found his purse, as well as his box of powder, in

his clothes, so he was able to buy the necessaries for their journey at the first place they came to, and ere long they arrived before the gates of Bagdad. Great astonishment was excited in the town by the arrival of the Caliph; he had been given up as dead, and the people were, therefore, rejoiced to have their beloved ruler back again.

All the more bitter and violent became their anger towards the traitor Mirza; they made their way into the palace, and took the old magician and his son prisoners. The Caliph had the old man taken to the room in the ruined building in which the Princess had spent her days as an owl, and there hanged. To the son, who was ignorant of his father's arts, he gave the choice of being put to death or of snuffing the powder. He chose the latter, and the Grand Vizier handed him the box. A good pinch of the powder, and the Caliph's magic word turned him into a stork, and the Caliph then had him put into an iron cage, and placed in his garden.

Caliph Chasid and his wife lived long and happily together; their pleasantest hours were always those when the Grand Vizier came to visit them in the afternoon. Then their conversation often turned on their stork adventure, and when the Caliph was in more than usually good spirits he so far forgot his dignity as to show how the Grand Vizier looked when he was a stork. He then gravely stalked up and down the room, stiffening his feet, clattering, and waving his arms as if they were wings, and then showed how he turned to the east, crying out in vain "Mu—Mu——." This entertainment was always the source of great amusement to the Caliph's wife and children, but if the Caliph went on too long clattering and bowing and

crying "Mu—Mu——" then the Vizier used to threaten that he would tell the Caliph's wife all about the discussion they had had outside the door of the owl's room.

When Selim Baruch had thus finished his tale, the merchants all expressed the great pleasure they had had in listening to it. "In truth, the afternoon has gone without our even taking note of how it was passing!" said one of them as he drew back the curtain of the tent. "The evening breeze blows fresh; we may yet cover a good bit of the way." His friends agreeing, the tents were struck, and once more the caravan started, in the order in which it had arrived.

They rode nearly the whole night through, for the days were sultry, but the nights refreshing and bright with stars. Coming at length to a convenient halting-place, they pitched their tents, and lay down to rest.

Nothing happened to prevent the caravan from journeying on as usual the next day, and after the travellers had halted and refreshed themselves Selim, the stranger, turned to Muley, the youngest of the merchants, and said:

"You are the youngest of our party, it is true, but you are always in such lively spirits that I am sure you must have some merry tale to tell us. Dish it up for us, that we may enjoy a little good cheer after the heat of the day."

"I would gladly tell you something that would amuse you," answered Muley; "but it becomes youth to be modest in all things, therefore I think one of the older members of our company should have the precedence. There is Zaleukos, always so grave and reserved—ought he not to relate to us what has made

life so serious for him ? Maybe, should we learn what his trouble is, we might be able to soothe it, for we are glad to be of help to a brother, even when he is not of our own faith."

The man so addressed was a Greek merchant, middle-aged, handsome, and well-built, but exceedingly serious. Notwithstanding that he was an unbeliever (that is, not a Mussulman) his travelling companions were all fond of him, for his whole demeanour had called forth their respect and trust. Further, it may be remarked that he had but one hand, and his companions conjectured that the loss of the other might possibly be the cause of his unusual gravity of temper.

In response to Muley's friendly speech Zaleukos answered : " I am honoured by the confidence you have in me ; trouble have I none, at least none that you, my friends, with the best will in the world, could help me out of. Since Muley, however, seems somewhat to upbraid me with my seriousness, I will relate to you what I think will justify me in your eyes for being graver than other people. You see that I have lost my left hand ; I was not born without it, but forfeited it on one of the most terrible days of my life. How far I was guilty, and whether since that time I have reason or not to be less cheerful than my circumstances appear to demand, you must yourselves judge when you have heard the tale of the Severed Hand."

THE TALE OF THE SEVERED HAND.

I WAS born in Constantinople ; my father was an interpreter to the Porte, and also drove a lucrative trade in scents and silk stuffs. He gave me a good education, partly teaching me himself, but I received further instruction from one of our priests. At first his intention was to take me into his shop, but as I developed greater capabilities than he had expected he followed the advice of his friends, and had me brought up as a physician, for anyone who possessed a little more knowledge than the usual quack could make his fortune in Constantinople. A good many French people came to our house, and one of them persuaded my father to let him take me back with him to his own country—to Paris—where, he said, everything I required to learn was best taught, and for nothing. Moreover, he himself was willing to pay my expenses if I returned with him. My father, who had been a traveller himself in his youth, gave his consent, and the Frenchman told me to hold myself in readiness to start in three months' time. I was wild with joy, and did not know how to bear myself, waiting for the time when we were to embark. At last the Frenchman had settled his affairs, and made final preparations for the journey. On the eve of our starting my father led me into his little sleeping-room ; there on the table I saw lying weapons and beautiful dresses, but what chiefly attracted my attention was a large heap of gold pieces, for I had never before seen so many together at a time. My father embraced me, saying : “ See, my son, I have provided these clothes for you to take with you on your journey ; these weapons, too,

are for you—they are the same that your grandfather gave me when I was first going abroad. You know how to handle them—of that I am sure—but do not use them unless you are attacked, and then strike with all your might. My store of riches is not great, but, understand, I have divided it into three portions : one is for you, one for my own provision and necessities, and the third will remain sacred and untouched, ready to serve you in time of need.” It was thus my old father spoke, while the tears gathered in his eyes, perhaps from some sense of foreboding, for I never saw him again.

We had a prosperous voyage, and soon reached the French coast ; another six days’ journey brought us to the great city of Paris. My French friend hired a room for me, and told me to use my money, which amounted in all to two thousand dollars, carefully and economically. I spent three years in Paris, learning everything that was necessary to make me proficient in my profession ; but I should not be speaking the truth if I said that I enjoyed my stay there, for the ways of the people were anything but pleasing to me ; consequently I made few friends, but those I had were highminded young men.

Meanwhile I had not once received any tidings of my father, and the longing to see my home again became so urgent that I seized the first favourable opportunity of returning.

A French embassy, as it happened, was starting for the Porte, and I engaged myself as surgeon to the retinue of the envoys, and safely arrived in Stamboul. But I found my father’s house shut up, and the neighbours seemed much astonished to see me ; my father, they said, had died two months before. The priest,

who had been my former teacher, brought me the key, and, alone and forlorn, I passed into the empty and forsaken house. I found everything just as my father had left it; only the money which he had promised to keep for me was missing. I inquired of the priest about this; he bowed, and replied: "Your father died a holy man, for he bequeathed all his money to the Church." This was incomprehensible to me, and has remained so ever since. But what was I to do? I had no proof to bring against the priest, and could only be thankful that he had not taken the house and all the goods as a legacy to himself. This was my first misfortune, but blow followed blow from this time forward.

My fame as a physician did not become widespread, for I shrank from advertising myself like an ordinary quack, and everywhere I missed my father's introduction, which would have brought me to the knowledge of the richest and most important men in the town, who now no longer gave a thought to poor Zaleukos. Then, again, my father's wares did not sell quickly, for his old customers went away when he died, and it was difficult to get new ones to come. I was sitting one day, thinking hopelessly of my affairs, when it came into my mind that I had often seen countrymen of mine going about France and selling their wares in the market-places of the various towns; and I also remembered seeing these wares very quickly sold off, for people liked to buy what came from foreign parts: that kind of business must, I felt certain, be extremely profitable. I made up my mind on the spot. I sold my paternal house, gave a part of the money I got for it to a trusty friend to keep for me, and with the remainder bought a stock of wares—such

as shawls, silk stuffs, ointments, and oils, which are not generally to be had in France ; took my berth on a ship, and started on my second voyage to the latter country. It seemed as though, as soon as I left the Dardanelles behind me, my good fortune returned. We had a quick and pleasant voyage. On arriving in France I went through the different towns, large and small, and everywhere found ready customers for my goods. My friend in Stamboul kept me constantly supplied with fresh stores, and I prospered more and more from day to day. When I had saved enough to make it safe for me to venture a larger undertaking I set out with my wares for Italy. I ought to add that I also made use of my profession, and this too brought me in not a little profit. On first coming to a town I sent out notices that a Greek physician had arrived who had been successful with a great many patients, and with my drugs and unguents I earned many a good gold piece. In the course of my journeyings I came at last to Florence. Here I made up my mind to stay for some time, not only because I liked the place so much, but also because I felt the need of rest after the fatigue of travelling about so continually. I, therefore, rented a shop in the St Croce quarter of the town, and also took two charming rooms for myself, leading on to a balcony, in an inn hard by. I lost no time in sending out my circulars, introducing myself both as physician and merchant. Scarcely had I opened my shop than people came streaming in from all quarters to buy, and although I put a somewhat high price on my wares I sold more than others, for I always made myself affable and friendly towards my customers. I had already spent four pleasant days in Florence when, as I was shutting up my shop

in the evening, and as usual going through my stores to see what ointments I had left, I came across, in one of the small boxes, a piece of paper which I had no remembrance of having put there. I opened it, and found written inside an invitation asking me to be, that night, punctually at twelve o'clock, on the bridge known as the Ponte Vecchio. I tried for a long time to think who it could be who had thus sent for me, but as I did not know a soul in Florence I decided that someone probably wished to take me secretly to visit a patient, which had often before been the case. I determined, therefore, to go, but took the precaution to arm myself with the sword which my father had given me.

When it was nearing midnight I started, and was soon at the Ponte Vecchio. The bridge was quiet and deserted, and I resolved to wait until whosoever it was who had asked me to come should make his appearance. It was a cold night, the moon was shining brightly, and I looked down on the rippled waters of the Arno, shimmering far away in the moonlight. The church clocks in the town struck twelve; I turned round, and there before me stood a tall man enveloped in a red cloak, a corner of which he held before his face. I was rather startled at first, for he had come up behind me so suddenly, but I quickly recovered myself, and said: "If it is you who sent for me here, say what it is you are pleased to command." The man in the red cloak turned round, and said slowly: "Follow!" But I did not feel altogether comfortable in going off alone with this unknown person, and I stood still, and said: "Not so, my good friend, I must ask you first to tell me whither I am to follow; you might also show me a little of your face, that I may be

able to judge if your intentions towards me are honest." The man did not seem concerned at all at my words, and merely replied: "If you do not wish to come, Zaleukos, then stay where you are!" And he began walking away. Then my anger broke out. "Do you think," I cried, "that a man such as I am is going to let himself be fooled by every chance comer, and that I am going quietly to consent to having waited here this cold night for nothing?" With three strides I had caught him up, and, seizing hold of his mantle, I addressed him still more angrily, at the same time laying my hand on my sword, but I found the mantle had been left in my grasp, while the unknown one had disappeared round the nearest corner. My anger gradually abated; anyhow, I had the mantle, and it would surely help me to find out the meaning of this extraordinary adventure. I put the mantle round me, and went back home. I had almost reached it when someone brushed past me, whispering in French: "Take care, Count; there is nothing to be done to-night," but before I could look round the figure had gone, and I only saw a shadow gliding past the walls of the houses. That this warning was meant for the owner of the red mantle and not for me I, of course, knew, but it threw no light on the mystery. Next morning I considered within myself what to do. I at first thought that I would have the mantle cried, as if I had found it, but then the unknown man could send a third person to fetch it, and I should still have no clue to the matter. While I was thus cogitating in my own mind I began to examine the mantle more closely. It was made of thick crimson Genoese velvet, trimmed with astrachan, and richly embroidered with gold. The splendid appearance of the cloak suggested an idea to me which

I decided to carry out. Taking the mantle with me into the shop I exposed it for sale, at the same time putting such a high price upon it that I felt sure no one would buy it. My object in doing this was to keep a sharp eye on everyone who asked about it, for after the unknown one had dropped his cloak I had distinctly seen his figure, although only for a moment, and I was certain that I should recognise it again among a thousand. The extraordinary beauty of the mantle attracted all eyes, and many of the customers were eager to buy, but not one of them in the least resembled the man for whom I was looking, and not one was willing to give the high price I had put upon it. It struck me also as remarkable that when I asked one or the other of them if there were a mantle like that to be found anywhere else in Florence the answer was always No, and that such a costly and elegant specimen of work had never been seen there before.

It was getting on towards evening when a young man, who had often been in my shop, and who had already that day offered a high sum of money for the cloak, again came in, and, throwing a purse of money on the table, exclaimed: "By God, Zaleukos, I must have that mantle of yours, though I have to go about as a beggar ever after," and thereupon began counting out his gold pieces. I was now in a great state of perplexity. I had only hung up the cloak on the chance of the unknown one catching sight of it, and now here was a young fool ready to pay the enormous price I asked for it. There was nothing for me to do, however, but to let him have it, and, after all, I thought, I had reason to be pleased that I was so well compensated for my night's adventure. The young man flung the cloak round him, and was leaving,

when, just as he was crossing the threshold, he turned and, unfastening a piece of paper that was stuck on to the mantle, threw it to me, saying: "Here is something, Zaleukos, that does not, I think, belong to it." I picked the paper up unconcernedly, when, lo and behold, there written upon it I saw: "Bring the cloak to-night at the hour before named on to the Ponte Vecchio; four hundred gold pieces await you there." I was thunderstruck; I had, then, foolishly bartered away my good fortune, and entirely failed of my object! But I did not stay long thinking, for, gathering up the two hundred gold pieces, I rushed out after the young man who had bought the cloak, crying out: "Take back your money, good sir, and let me have the mantle; I find it impossible to part with it."

At first he took it only for a joke, but when I persisted he grew angry, called me a fool, and finally we came to blows. I was fortunate enough to get hold of the mantle while we were struggling together, and was on the point of running off with it when the young man called the police to his aid, and carried me before the judge. The latter was astonished at my behaviour, and awarded the cloak to my accuser. Then I offered the young man a sum of fifty, eighty, even a hundred, above what he had given if he would let me have the cloak back again, and what my entreaties had failed to accomplish my money was successful in procuring. He took my good gold pieces, and I returned in triumph with my property, obliged to put up with the knowledge that everyone in Florence took me for a lunatic. General opinion, however, was a matter of indifference to me, for I knew a good deal better than they did that the affair was a profitable one for myself.

I waited with impatience for the night to come; then I started, at the same hour as the previous day, with the cloak under my arm, for the Ponte Vecchio. With the last stroke of the clock the figure emerged from the darkness, and came towards me. It was unmistakably the man I had seen before. "Have you the cloak with you?" he asked. "I have," I answered, "and it has cost me a good hundred in gold pieces." "I know it," replied the other. "See, however, here are four hundred." He went with me to the side of the bridge, and counted out the money on the broad balustrade. Four hundred, sure enough, and the gleam of the gold in the moonlight made my heart dance. I little guessed, alas! that it was to be its last taste of joy. I put the money into my pocket, and then turned to have a good look at my beneficent and unknown companion, but he had a mask over his face, and I could only see the dark eyes darting terrifying glances at me. "I thank you, sir, for your kindness," I said. "What further service do you require of me? As I said to you before, however, I cannot consent to do anything that affects my honour."

"Your precaution is unnecessary," he replied as he threw his cloak over his shoulders. "I require your help as a physician not for the living but for the dead."

"How can that be?" I exclaimed in astonishment.

"I came with my sister here from a distant country," he began, making a sign to me to follow him, "and we have been living with a friend of the family. My sister died yesterday after a short illness, and the relations wish to bury her to-morrow. According to an old family custom, however, we ought all to be buried in the vault with our ancestors, and many who

have died away from their native place have been embalmed and brought to lie there. I am going to give up the body to our relatives here, but the head I must send to my father, that he may see his daughter once again."

The custom of cutting off the heads of one's beloved relatives seemed a somewhat revolting one to me, but I did not venture to express my feelings for fear of offending the stranger, and I merely said that I understood how to embalm the dead, and begged him to take me to the lady who had just died. I could not, however, refrain from asking why all this should be done with such secrecy and in the night. He explained in answer that his relations were horrified at his intention, and would have prevented him carrying it out in the daytime, but if once the head were off they could say no more about it; he would, he added, have brought the head to me, but I could understand the natural feeling which held him back from doing the operation himself.

By this time we had come to a large and splendid-looking house, which my companion informed me was the goal of our midnight walk. We went past the principal entrance, and entered by a small door, which he carefully closed behind him, and then, still in the dark, went up a narrow, winding stair. It led us into a dimly-lit passage, from which we passed into a room, which was lighted by a lamp hanging from the ceiling.

There was a bed in the room, and on it lay the dead woman. The man turned aside his head, and appeared to be trying to conceal his tears; he pointed to the bed, ordered me to do my work dexterously and quickly, and left the room.

I took out my knives, which I always carried about with me in my quality of physician, and approached the bed. Only the head of the corpse was to be seen, but this was so beautiful that I was seized involuntarily with a feeling of heartfelt compassion. The long, dark tresses of hair fell around the pale face, the eyes were closed. I first made an incision in the skin, according to the practice of surgeons when they are about to amputate a limb, after which, taking out my sharpest knife, I gave one cut right through the throat. And then, Oh, horror! the dead woman opened her eyes; she immediately, however, closed them again, and with one deep sigh seemingly then, and then only, breathed her last. At the same moment a stream of warm blood spurted out towards me from the wound, and I felt convinced that I had killed the poor thing; that she was dead now was certain, for there could be no recovery from the wound I had given. I stood for a few minutes in fearful anxiety at the thought of what had happened. Had the man with the red cloak deceived me, or had the sister really been apparently dead? The latter possibility seemed to me the most likely. I did not feel I should have the courage to tell the brother of the dead woman that probably a less hasty cut would have awakened her without killing her, and I, therefore, was anxious to finish separating the head, but the dying woman gave one more groan, stretched herself out with a convulsive movement of pain, and died. I could stand no more; overpowered with horror I rushed, shuddering, from the room. The passage outside was in darkness, for the lamp had gone out; I could see no sign of the man who had brought me there, and I had to feel my way as best I could along the wall to

get to the stairs. I found them at last, and half falling, half sliding, I reached the bottom. Still there was no one to be seen. The door, however, was only pushed to, and in another moment I was in the street, and able to breathe more freely, for the atmosphere of the house had become unbearable to me. Spurred by the hideous remembrance of what had happened I tore back to my home, and there buried myself in the cushions of my couch to try and forget the terrible thing I had done. But all sleep had flown, and I lay, unable to compose myself, till the morning light warned me that I must endeavour to calm my feelings. It seemed to me unlikely that the man who had led me into the committal of this atrocious deed would betray me, so I resolved to go at once into my shop, and set about business with as undisturbed a countenance as possible. But, alas! I now for the first time became aware of another circumstance which greatly added to my trouble and agitation. My cap and my girdle, as well as my knives, were missing, and I could not be sure if I had left them in the room with the woman I had killed, or had dropped them in my flight along the road. Unfortunately, the former was the more probable case, and I ran every chance, therefore, of being taken up as the murderer.

I opened my shop at the usual hour; my neighbour, who was a talkative man, came in, as it was his custom to do every morning. "And what do you say to this dreadful thing," he began at once, "that took place last night?" I appeared not to know anything about it. "You don't mean to tell me that you have not yet heard what everyone is talking about all over the town? You haven't heard that the fairest flower of Florence, the beautiful Bianca, the daughter of the

Governor, was murdered during the night? Only yesterday I saw her passing so gaily along the street with her betrothed, for to-day they were to have been married."

Every word he spoke seemed to stab me through the heart. My martyrdom was revived with every fresh customer who came in, for each had his tale to tell, the one more horrible than the other, and yet nothing that they could tell me equalled in horror that which I had seen with the eyes. About noon a police officer entered my shop, and told me to clear out the customers. "Signor Zaleukos," he said, as he drew forth the missing articles belonging to me, "do these things belong to you?" I considered for a moment whether I would not deny all acquaintance with them, but, happening to catch sight through the half-open door of my landlord and several other people who knew me, and who could certainly witness against me, I decided that I had better not make matters worse for myself by lying, and confessed my ownership of the said articles. The police officer then ordered me to follow him, and he conducted me to a large building, which I soon found out was the prison; there he assigned me a room, in which to await further proceedings.

My condition was truly pitiable as I sat there alone thinking over the terrible position I was in. The thought of having committed murder, even involuntarily, haunted me continually; what was more, I could not conceal from myself that I had been tempted by the glitter of gold, otherwise I should not have fallen so blindly into the trap laid for me. Two hours after my arrest I was again summoned. On leaving the room I was taken down a long flight of stairs, and

then into a large hall. Here I saw twelve men, mostly grey-haired, seated round a long table which was hung with black. The sides of the hall were lined with seats, now occupied by the most distinguished persons in Florence, and the galleries above were packed with spectators. As I stepped in front of the table a man with a gloomy and sorrowful countenance arose—it was the Governor. He spoke to those assembled there, saying that as he was the father in this case he could not be the judge, and that he, therefore, abdicated his post for the present in favour of the eldest of the Senators. The eldest of the Senators was an old man of at least ninety years of age; he stooped in standing, and his temples were covered with thin white hairs, but the eyes had not lost their fire, and the voice was firm and strong. He began by asking me if I confessed the murder. I begged to be allowed to speak, and then fearlessly, and in a clear voice, I related what I had done and all that I knew. I noticed that the Governor turned first white then red as I proceeded with my narration, and when I had finished he started up, crying out furiously. “What, you miserable wretch! You want to lay upon another man the burden of a crime which you yourself committed out of avarice?” The Senator rebuked him for thus interrupting, since he had resigned his office of his own free will; and also, he added, it was by no means proved that I had committed the crime out of avarice, since, according to his own statement, nothing had been stolen from the victim. He went further still, and told the Governor that he would have to give particulars of his daughter’s former life, since in that way only could it be decided whether I had spoken the truth or not. He then adjourned the case for that

day, so that he might examine the papers of the deceased, which the Governor would hand over to him. I was taken back to prison, where I passed a miserable day, eagerly hoping all the time that some sort of connection might be traced between the murdered woman and the red cloak. I entered the Court of Justice the next morning, buoyed up with hope; several letters were lying on the table, and the old Senator asked me if they were in my handwriting. I looked at them and saw at once that they must have been written by the same person who had sent me the two notes. This I declared to the Senators, but they seemed to take no notice of my words, and only answered that it was quite certain that no one but myself could have written them, as they were signed with a Z, the first letter of my name. The letters were full of threats addressed to the deceased, and warnings against the marriage that she was on the eve of contracting.

The Governor must have given some curious information concerning me, for I was treated with much greater severity and suspicion than the day before. I referred them, for evidence of my good character, to the papers which would be found in my rooms; but I was informed that they had already been searched, and that nothing had been forthcoming. By the close of this day's hearing I had given up all hope, and on being brought up again on the third day my sentence was read out to me: I was convicted of a premeditated murder, and condemned to death. To this terrible pass had matters now come; there was I, bereft of everything on earth that was still dear to me, far from my home, an innocent victim, condemned in the prime of life to suffer death by the hands of the executioners!

I was sitting in my solitary cell on the evening of the terrible day that had decided my fate for me, with all hope extinguished, and endeavouring earnestly to fix my thoughts on death, when the door of my prison opened, and in walked a man, who stood regarding me for some moments without speaking. "And is it thus that I see you again, Zaleukos?" he said. I had not recognised him by the dull light of the lamp, but the sound of his voice awoke in me some old remembrance. It was Valetty, one of the few who had been my friends during my student days at Paris. He then told me that he had been passing accidentally through Florence, where his father held a prominent position, and, being told my history, he had come to see me once again, and to hear from my own mouth how I had been led into committing such a fearful crime. I then gave him a full account of the whole affair. It seemed to him a most extraordinary tale, and he implored me to tell him, my only friend, the whole truth, that I might not leave the world with a lie upon my lips. I swore to him, with the most solemn oath, that every word I had told him was true, and that **one** sin alone pressed upon my conscience—the sin of having so allowed myself to be dazzled with the sight of the gold that I had not been alive to the improbability of the tale that was told me by the stranger.

"You did not know Bianca, then?" my friend asked.

I assured him that I had never even seen her. Valetty then went on to say that a great mystery hung over the whole affair; the Governor had urged on my sentence, and it was now generally rumoured among the people that I had been acquainted with Bianca for a long time, and had killed her, out of revenge, when

I learned that she was about to marry someone else. I pointed out to him that all this might very well apply to the man with the red cloak, but that I had no means of proving his complicity in the deed. Valetty embraced me, weeping, and promised to do everything in his power at least to save my life. I had little hope; but I knew that Valetty was a clever man, and versed in the law, and that he would do all he could to rescue me. For two whole days I waited in suspense, but at last Valetty reappeared.

"I bring you some comfort, although but of a sorry kind," he said. "You are to be set free and allowed to live, but with the loss of one hand."

I was deeply moved, and thanked my friend for having thus saved my life. The Governor, he told me, had been deaf to all entreaties that the case might be heard again; at last, not wishing to appear unjust, he had so far given in that he had consented, if a similar case could be found among the historical records of the town, to adjust his sentence to the one then passed on the criminal. My friend and his father had been day and night studying the old books, and at last had come across a case that agreed with mine. The sentence ran: "His left hand shall be cut off, his goods confiscated, and he himself banished for ever." And such was now to be my sentence, and I had now to prepare myself for the agonising moment which awaited me. I will not describe to you that terrible scene when I laid my hand on the block in the open market-place and became covered with my own blood.

Valetty took me into his own house until my wound was cured, and then he generously supplied me with travelling money, for the State took possession of everything that I had so laboriously earned. On

leaving Florence I went first to Sicily, and sailed from there by the first ship to Constantinople. The sum of money I had left with my friend there was something for me to depend upon, and I also begged him to allow me to take up my abode with him; to my astonishment he asked me why I did not go and live in my own house. A stranger, he continued, had bought a house in the Greek quarter under my name, and had informed the neighbours that I was soon returning myself. I immediately started off with my friend to see the house, and was welcomed by all my old acquaintances. One of the older merchants gave me a letter which had been left for me by the man who had bought the house.

It ran thus: "Zaleukos! Two hands are ready and eagerly longing to do everything that may prevent you from feeling the loss of one. The house that you see, and everything inside it, is yours, and every year money will be paid to you, which will set you among the richest of the land. May you one day forgive him who is more unhappy than yourself." I had no difficulty in guessing who had thus written to me, and on inquiring further the merchant told me that it was a man whom he took for a Frenchman, and that he wore a red cloak. Knowing what I did, I confessed to myself that the unknown one could not be entirely bereft of all nobler feeling. I found my new house furnished with the best of everything, and also a shop fitted up with wares far more beautiful than any I had had before.

Ten years have passed since then, and I still travel about for business purposes—more out of old habit, however, than because I have any need to do so—but I have never again visited the country where such

trouble fell upon me. Every year since then I have received regularly a thousand gold pieces ; but although it is some source of gladness to me that the unhappy man acts thus nobly on my behalf, no money can repay me for the sorrow I carry about at heart, for I see ever before me, with unabated horror, the picture of the murdered Bianca.

With these words Zaleukos the Greek merchant brought his tale to an end. The others had all listened to it with profound interest ; the stranger, particularly, seemed greatly moved by it, and had sighed deeply once or twice during the recital, and Muley appeared at one point to have tears in his eyes. They talked together over the tale for a long time.

“ And do you not feel a hatred towards that unknown man who so shamefully occasioned you the loss of one of your best limbs, who even brought your life into danger ? ”

“ Formerly,” replied the Greek, “ there were, indeed, hours when I arraigned him in my heart before God for having brought this trouble upon me and poisoned my whole life ; but I found consolation in the faith of my fathers, which bids us forgive our enemies ; and, more than that, I know that he is far unhappier than I am.”

“ You are a noble-hearted man ! ” cried the stranger, and he grasped the Greek’s hand with emotion.

Their conversation was interrupted by the captain of the escort, who came into the tent with a look of anxiety on his face to warn us that it was not safe to go to rest, as this was the place where the caravans were generally attacked ; what was more, his men thought they could see a party of horsemen in the distance. The merchants were greatly terrified on

hearing this ; their fear surprised Selim, the stranger, for, considering that they were so well armed, he did not see what they had to be alarmed at in a troop of thievish Arabs.

"Indeed, sir," answered the bearer of the news, "if it were but such ordinary rabble as that we might go to sleep in peace, but for some time past the terrible Orbasan has been showing himself again, and one has need, therefore, to be on one's guard."

The stranger was anxious to know who this Orbasan was, and the old merchant Achmed told him that there were all kinds of legends current among the people concerning this extraordinary man. "Some of them," he said, "look upon him as a superhuman being, for he often sustains a fight with only five or six men ; others think that he is a brave Frenchman whom misfortune of some kind has driven into this neighbourhood ; but what is best and most certainly known about him is that he is an infamous highwayman and robber."

"But you cannot positively assert that," put in Lezah, one of the merchants. "Even if he is a robber he is, notwithstanding, a man of nobility of heart, and as such he proved himself to my brother, as I could relate to you. All of his tribe now are well-disciplined men, and as long as he is wandering about the desert no other tribe dares to show itself. Neither does he rob in the same way that others do ; he only levies money on the caravans for their safe protection, and those that pay it without demur can continue their journey in security, for Orbasan is Lord of the Desert."

Such was the talk that went on within the tent, but the men who were stationed on guard around the encampment began to grow uneasy. A somewhat

considerable party of horsemen could now be seen about a mile and a half off, and they appeared to be riding straight towards the encampment. One of the men, therefore, went into the tent to give warning that, in all probability, they would be shortly attacked. The merchants consulted with one another what was best to be done: whether they should ride out to meet them or wait on the spot for the attack. Achmed and the two older merchants advised the latter, but the fiery-tempered Muley and Zaleukos wanted to follow out the first idea, and called to the stranger to side with them. He, however, quietly drew from his girdle a small blue handkerchief, dotted with red stars, which he tied to the head of a lance, and then ordered one of the slaves to stick it up on the tent; he would wager his life, he said, that when the riders saw this ensign they would ride quietly past. Muley doubted the success of this measure, but the slave, nevertheless, stuck up the lance as commanded. Meanwhile everyone inside the encampment had seized his arms, and was watching with anxiety the approach of the riders. The latter, however, apparently caught sight of the sign erected over the tent, for they suddenly changed their course, and made a wide sweep in the opposite direction.

The travellers stood for some minutes gazing with astonishment, first at the horsemen, and then at the stranger. The latter appeared quite unconcerned, as if nothing had happened, and remained looking out over the far-stretching plain. Muley at length broke the silence. "Who are you, stranger, that you have the power to tame the wild hordes of the desert with a mere bit of rag?"

"You esteem my power at a higher rate than it is

worth," replied Selim Baruch. "I furnished myself with that ensign when I escaped from my imprisonment. Of what it signifies I myself am ignorant; all I know is, that whoever displays it travels under powerful protection."

The merchants thanked the stranger, and addressed him as their deliverer; and, indeed, the number of the horsemen had been such, that the caravan would not have been able to hold out long.

They now retired to rest with lighter hearts, and when the sun began to sink and the evening breeze to blow across the desert they broke up their encampment, and started afresh on their journey.

The next day they halted only about a day's journey from the edge of the desert, and the travellers having assembled as usual in the large tent Lezah, the merchant, began the conversation, and said:

"I was telling you yesterday that the dreaded Orbasan was a noble-minded man; will you allow me to-day to prove this to you by relating my brother's story? My father was Cadi at Alcara; he had three children, of whom I was the eldest, my brother and sister being both much younger than I was. I was twenty years of age when my father's brother sent for me; he appointed me heir to his property, on condition that I should remain with him till he died. He lived, however, to a great age, so that it was not till two years ago that I went back to my home, knowing nothing of the misfortune that had befallen my family, and of the merciful way in which Allah had overruled it."

THE RESCUE OF FATME

My brother Mustapha and my sister Fatme were nearly of the same age, the former being at most two years the elder. They loved one another dearly, and did all they could together to lighten the burden of life for my father, who had grown old and infirm. On Fatme's sixteenth birthday, Mustapha organised an entertainment in honour of the occasion. He invited all his sister's playmates, regaled them with choice viands in his father's garden, and in the evening, offered to take them all for a little trip on the water in a boat, which he had hired and fittingly decorated. Fatme and her friends accepted this proposal with delight, for the evening was fair and bright, and it was just the hour when the view of the town from the sea was most beautiful. The girls enjoyed themselves so much in the boat that they kept on persuading my brother to take them farther out to sea. Mustapha consented, but somewhat unwillingly, as a few days previously a corsair had been seen prowling about. Near the town there was a promontory, and the girls begged to be taken as far as this that they might watch the setting of the sun over the sea from that point. Just as they were rounding the promontory they caught sight, some little distance off, of a barque filled with armed men. Foreboding no good, Mustapha ordered the boat to be put about, and his men to row back to land. There seemed some justification for his fears, for the barque quickly followed in pursuit, and, being manned with a greater number of rowers, soon overtook the boat, and stood between it and the shore. But now the girls, becoming aware of the danger they

were in, jumped up, and began screaming and crying. In vain Mustapha tried to quiet them; in vain he urged them to sit still, for their running to and fro was endangering the boat, and it was likely to capsize. It was of no use—and no sooner did they see that they were drawing near the other vessel than they all rushed with one accord to the stern, and the boat upset. Meanwhile the movements of the barque had been watched with some suspicion from the shore, for there had been for some time past a good deal of uneasiness with regard to corsairs. Several boats put out from land to go to my brother's assistance, but only arrived in time to help to pick up those who had fallen into the water, and in the confusion the barque slipped away unobserved. The girls had been taken up into two boats, and the rescuers, being uncertain if they had all been saved, drew near one another, when, alas! it was found that Fatme and one of her friends were missing; at the same time they discovered a man in one of the boats who was a stranger and unknown to all of them. Being threatened by Mustapha he confessed that he belonged to the pirate ship, which was lying at anchor two miles off to the east, and said that his mates had left him behind while he was trying to pick up the girls, and he further declared that he had seen two of them being drawn up on to the ship.

My father's grief was unbounded, and Mustapha almost died of sorrow. Not only did he mourn for his dear sister, reproaching himself for having been the cause of her misfortune, but it seemed that the friend who was sharing her disaster had been promised to my brother as a wife by her parents, and he had not yet had the courage to tell this to his father, for the parents were poor and of humble descent. Now,

my father was an austere man, and when his sorrow had somewhat abated he sent for Mustapha, and addressed him as follows:—"Your folly has robbed me of the comfort of my old age and the joy of my eyes. Begone from here; I banish you for ever from my sight, I curse you and your descendants, and not until you bring Fatme back to me shall your father's curse be lifted from your head."

My poor brother had not expected this; he had already made up his mind to go in search of Fatme and her friend, and had but desired to take his father's blessing with him on his quest, and now he was driven forth with a curse upon his head. If his former grief, however, had broken his spirit this culminating trouble, which fell upon him undeserved, helped to steel his courage.

He went to the pirate, who had been imprisoned, and asked him in which direction his ship was sailing, and learnt that it traded in slaves, and generally held a large market for these in Balsora.

On returning to the house to make preparations for his journey, his father, whose anger seemed to be a little allayed, sent him a purse of money to help him on the way. Mustapha then took sorrowful leave of the parents of his betrothed Zoraide, and started for Balsora. Mustapha travelled overland, for there was no vessel that went direct to Balsora from our little town; he was, therefore, forced to take heavy journeys every day, for fear of arriving in Balsora too long a time after the pirates. As he had a good horse and no luggage he had every hope of reaching his destination by the close of the sixth day, but on the evening of the fourth day, as he was riding along alone, he was suddenly attacked by three men. Per-

ceiving that they were strong and well armed, and that they had intentions on his horse and his money rather than on his life, he called out to them that he would surrender. They dismounted, and tied his feet under his horse's belly, and then, without speaking a word, put him between them, and went off at a quick trot, one of them holding his horse's bridle. Mustapha gloomily gave himself up to despair; it seemed as if the unhappy man were already beginning to experience the fulfilment of his father's curse. How could he hope to rescue Fatme and Zoraide, robbed of all his means, with nothing but his own wretched life to expend on their behalf? He and his silent companions had been riding on for about a mile and a half when they turned off into a little valley enclosed by trees, where the soft, dark green grass, and a brook that ran rapidly along the bottom, seemed to invite repose. And there, in very deed, were pitched fifteen to twenty tents, with camels and beautiful horses tied to their pegs, while from one of them came the cheerful sound of a zither and of two men's fine voices. Surely, my brother thought, people who have chosen such a lively and pleasant halting-place cannot intend evil to me in their hearts, and it was without fear or apprehension that, his bonds being unfastened, he dismounted, at a sign from his conductors, and followed them. He was taken into a tent, larger than the others, and prettily, almost elegantly, decorated inside. Splendid gold-embroidered cushions, woven carpets, and gilt censers, which in any other place would have conveyed the impression of riches and luxury, here suggested only audacious robbery. A little old man was seated on one of the cushions; his face was ugly, his skin dark brown and shiny, and a look of malicious

cunning about his eyes and mouth gave him a particularly repulsive expression. Although he tried to put on an air of importance Mustapha quickly perceived that it was not for this man that the tent was so richly prepared, and the conversation between his conductors confirmed his suspicions. "Where is the Strong One?" they asked of the little man. "He is at the chase," answered the latter; "but he has commissioned me to act in his stead." "That was not wise on his part," retorted one of the robbers, "for it must be decided without delay whether this dog is to die or to pay, and the Strong One knows about that better than you do."

The little man's dignity rebelled at this; he stood on tiptoe to try to reach his adversary's ear with the tips of his fingers, and seemed, further, to have a longing to revenge himself by giving it a box, but, seeing that his efforts were fruitless, he fell back on abuse (and, truth to tell, the others were not behind-hand in following suit) until the tent shook with the violence of their strife. All at once the door of the tent was opened, and in walked a tall and stately man, as young and beautiful as a Persian prince; his dress and his arms, with the exception of a richly-mounted dagger and a magnificent sword, were extremely plain, but there was that in the calm expression of his eye and in his whole appearance which commanded respect without inspiring fear.

"Who is it who dares to begin quarrelling in my tent?" he called out to the frightened combatants. His question was followed by a deep silence, until one of the men who had brought Mustapha there explained what had passed. The face of the "Strong One," as they called him, grew red with anger. "When

did I ever put you in my place, Hassan ? ” he cried to the little man in a terrible voice. The latter seemed to shrink into himself with fear, so that he looked smaller than ever, and slunk away towards the entrance, when the Strong One made a step forward, and the Little One was seen to fly through the tent door with a strange and tremendous leap.

Now that the cause of disturbance had disappeared, the other three men led Mustapha before the master of the tent, who had meantime thrown himself down on the cushions : “ We have brought you the man whom you ordered us to make prisoner.”

The man addressed looked at the prisoner for some time, and then said : “ Pasha of Sulieika ! your own conscience will tell you why you are now standing before Orbasan.”

On hearing these words my brother threw himself down before the chief, and answered : “ O my lord ! you seem to be in error ; I am a poor, unhappy man, but not the Pasha whom you are seeking ! ”

Everyone in the tent was overcome with astonishment at this speech ; the master of the tent, however, said : “ It will be of little service to you to dissemble, for I can bring you face to face with witnesses who know you well.”

He then ordered Zuleima to be fetched, and an old woman was brought into the tent who, on being asked whether she did not recognise the Pasha of Sulieika in my brother, answered : “ Of a truth, yes !—and I can swear by the grave of the Prophet that it is the Pasha and no other.”

“ You see, miserable man, how your cunning comes to naught ? ” began the Strong One angrily. “ You are too mean a wretch for me to besmear my good

dagger with your blood, but to-morrow at dawn you shall be tied to the tail of my horse, and hunt with me through the woods until the sun sinks beneath the hills of Sulieika ! ”

Then my poor brother lost his courage. “ It is my cruel father’s curse that has brought me to this disgraceful death,” he exclaimed, weeping. “ And you, sweet sister, you, too, are lost; and you, my Zoraide ! ”

“ Your hypocrisy is of no avail,” said one of the robbers as he bound Mustapha’s hands behind his back. “ Make haste, and get out of the tent, for the Strong One is biting his lips and feeling for his dagger ; if you wish to spend another night alive you had better come.”

Just as the robbers were leading my brother out of the tent they met three others, driving a prisoner before them. They brought him inside. “ We have brought you the Pasha, according to your command,” they said, and led the prisoner in front of the Strong One. As the prisoner was being taken along my brother had the opportunity of observing him, and was struck with the resemblance which the man bore to him, the only difference being that the face was darker and the beard blacker. The Strong One appeared very much taken aback by the appearance of this second prisoner. “ Which of you two, then, is the right one ? ” he asked, looking first at my brother and then at the other man.

“ If it be the Pasha of Sulieika that you mean,” answered the prisoner in a voice of pride, “ I am he ! ”

The Strong One bent his grave, fierce eyes upon him for some time, then made a sign for him to be taken away. This done, he walked up to my brother, cut the cords

that bound him with his dagger, and made a sign to him to sit down beside him on the cushions.

"I am truly sorry, stranger, to have mistaken you for that monster; you must ascribe it to some peculiar dispensation of Heaven that led you into my brothers' hands just at the hour which was ordained for the downfall of that atrocious wretch."

My brother replied that the only favour he asked for was to be allowed to continue his journey as quickly as possible, as any delay might be fatal. The Strong One then asked what urgent affairs he had on hand, and Mustapha having related to him the whole story the latter advised him to remain that night in the tent, as both he and his horse must be in need of rest, and on the following day he would direct him along a way which would bring him to Balsora in a day and a half. My brother agreed to this, was treated with the greatest hospitality, and slept soundly in the robber's tent till morning broke.

On awaking he found himself alone in the tent; but outside he heard voices, which he could detect belonged to the master of the tent and to the little swarthy man. He listened awhile, and to his alarm overheard the latter endeavouring his best to persuade the other to have the stranger killed, since, if he were allowed to go free, he might betray everything.

Mustapha was quick to gather that the little man owed him a grudge for having been the cause of the bad treatment he had undergone the day before. The Strong One apparently paused for some minutes to consider the matter. "No," he said at last; "he is my guest, and the duties of hospitality are sacred to me; and, what is more, he does not look like a man who would betray us."

As he spoke these words he drew back the curtain, and came into the tent. "Peace be with you, Mustapha," he said. "Let us take a morning draught together, and then make ready to start." He handed my brother a goblet of sherbet, and, this being drunk, the horses were bridled, and Mustapha, with a lighter heart certainly than when he arrived, mounted without delay. They soon left the tents behind them, and struck into a broad path which led to the wood. The Strong One, meanwhile, related to my brother how this Pasha, whom they had caught out hunting, had promised to allow them to remain in his territory unmolested; but only a few weeks previously he had taken prisoner one of their bravest men, whom he had cruelly tortured, and then hanged. They had been lying in wait for him for a long time, and now he must die. Mustapha did not dare to say a word against this, for he was only too thankful to have got safely off himself with a whole skin.

At the entrance to the wood the Strong One halted, described to my brother the way he was to follow, and then bade him farewell, holding out his hand to him, with the words: "Mustapha, a strange chance has occasioned you to be the guest of the robber Orbasan. I have no need to request you not to betray what you have seen and heard. You have unjustly had to endure the agony of approaching death, and I owe you compensation. Accept this dagger as a remembrance; should you at any time stand in need of help send it to me, and I will hasten to your assistance. This purse you may find useful on your journey."

My brother thanked him for his generosity, and took the dagger; the purse, however, he refused. But Orbasan once more pressed his hand, and, dropping

the purse on the ground, galloped off with the rapidity of lightning, and disappeared into the wood. When Mustapha saw that it was of no use to try to overtake him he dismounted to pick up the purse, and was startled to see what the extent of his host's generosity had been, for the purse contained a heavy amount of gold. He thanked Allah for his deliverance, commended the noble robber to His mercy, and set off in good spirits to continue his journey to Balsora.

Lezah paused, and looked questioningly at the old merchant Achmed. "If it is as you have told us," said the latter, "I am willing to ameliorate my judgment of Orbasan, for he certainly behaved well and nobly to your brother."

"He acted like a brave Mussulman," exclaimed Muley; "but I hope you are not going to end your tale like that, for, if I am not mistaken, we are all anxious to hear further, and to know how your brother fared, and whether he was able to rescue his sister Fatme and the beautiful Zoraide."

"If I do not tire you I will gladly continue my story," replied Lezah, "for my brother's history is truly a remarkable one, and full of adventure."

It was at noon on the seventh day from his first starting that Mustapha rode through the gates of Balsora. As soon as he had found an inn where he could alight he asked when the yearly slave market would be held, and received the appalling answer that he had come two days too late. He was commiserated for his disappointment; he had lost a great deal, he was told, for on the very last day that the market was held there had been two such beautiful female slaves put up for sale that the eyes of all the buyers were upon them. There had been downright quarrelling

and fighting over them, but they had finally been sold at such an enormously high price that everyone except their present owner fought shy of it. There was no doubt left in Mustapha's mind, after he had made further inquiries, that these slaves were no other than the two unfortunate girls of whom he was in search. He further ascertained that the man who had bought both of them lived some forty leagues off from Balsora, and was called Thiuli-Kos, and that he was a person of importance, wealthy, and getting on in years, having previously been the High Admiral of the Sultan, but that now he had settled down to a quiet life to enjoy his accumulated riches.

Mustapha's first impulse was to mount again at once and to go in pursuit of Thiuli-Kos, who could scarcely have got a day's start of him. On further reflection, however, he bethought himself that, as a single-handed man, he had nothing wherewith to make good an encounter with this traveller of distinction, and still less to force his booty from him, and that some other plan must be devised. It was not long before an idea occurred to him: the mistake that had arisen about him and the Pasha of Sulieika, which had nearly proved so fatal to him, suggested the project that he should get entrance into the house of Thiuli-Kos, and make an attempt in that way to rescue the two unhappy girls. In view of this he hired servants and horses, Orbasan's gold now standing him in good stead, provided himself and them with magnificent clothing, and started on his way to Thiuli's castle. Five days' journey brought him into the neighbourhood of the castle; it stood in the middle of a beautiful plain, and was surrounded by high walls, above which only a small portion of the buildings could be seen.

Having come so near the goal of his journey Mustapha dyed his hair and beard black, and rubbed his face with the juice of a plant which gave it a brownish tinge, similar to what he had noticed on the Pasha. He then sent a messenger to the castle to ask, in the name of the Pasha of Sulieika, for the favour of a night's lodging. The servant returned, accompanied by four richly-clad slaves, who took hold of the bridle of Mustapha's horse, and led him into the courtyard of the castle. Here they assisted him to dismount, and four other slaves conducted him up a broad flight of marble stairs into Thiuli's presence.

The latter, a lively old fellow, greeted my brother with every mark of respect, and ordered the best of everything which his cook could prepare to be set before him. When the meal was over Mustapha endeavoured by degrees to bring the conversation round to the matter of the new slaves, and Thiuli extolled their beauty, and only regretted that they were still in such melancholy spirits, but he thought that this would no doubt soon pass off. My brother was pleased to have had such a reception, and laid himself down to rest inspired with the best of hopes.

It might have been about an hour after he had fallen asleep when he was awakened by the blinding light of a lamp falling on his eyes. He sat up, and thought that he must be dreaming, for there before him, standing with a lamp in his hand, his wide mouth distorted by a malicious smile, stood the very little swarthy-coloured man whom he had seen in Orbasan's tent. Mustapha pinched his arm and pulled his nose to make sure that he was awake, but the apparition still remained.

"What do you want coming to my bedside like

this ? ” Mustapha exclaimed when he had recovered from his astonishment.

“ Do not disturb yourself, dear sir ! ” said the little man. “ I have, it is true, guessed the reason of your coming here ; besides, your worthy countenance had not gone from my recollection, although I must confess if I myself had not helped with my own hand at the hanging of the Pasha I might, perhaps, have been deceived. But now I am here to ask you a question.”

“ Before you tell me anything else tell me how you came here,” answered Mustapha, who was enraged at finding himself discovered.

“ I can soon tell you that,” responded the other. “ I could not get on with the Strong One any longer, and so I fled ; but it was you, Mustapha, who were actually the cause of our disagreement, and, therefore, you must promise to give me your sister to wife, and I will help you all three to get away ; if you refuse to do this I go at once to my new master, and tell him a few things about the new Pasha.”

Mustapha was beside himself with fear and anger ; just as he had thought that he was nearing the desired goal was he to let this miserable creature frustrate his hopes ? There was but one thing to do if he wished still to carry out his intentions, and that was to kill the little monster. He gave a spring, and leapt from his bed towards him ; but the little man, who had evidently been prepared for something like this, let the lamp fall, so that it went out, and sprang away in the dark, calling : “ Help ! Murder ! ” Mustapha would have given something to know what was best to do : he must for the moment give up all thought of the girls and think how to save himself. He ran, therefore, to the window to see if it were possible to

jump down from it. It was a good height above the ground, and opposite was a high wall, which he would have to scale. As he stood by the window, hesitating, he heard the sound of many voices drawing near; they were already at the door, when, in despair, he seized his dagger and his clothes, and swung himself out of the window. He fell heavily, but, feeling that there were no bones broken, he jumped up, and ran towards the wall which surrounded the castle, climbed up it, to the astonishment of his pursuers, and soon found himself in the open. He fled till he found himself inside a small wood, where he threw himself down, exhausted with fatigue. As he lay there he considered what was to be done; his horses and servants he had been obliged to sacrifice, but the money, which he carried in his girdle, had been saved.

His inventive mind soon suggested to him another possible way of effecting the rescue. He went farther on into the wood until he reached a village, and here, for a small sum of money, he bought a horse, which soon carried him to a town. There he inquired for a doctor, and was directed to an old and experienced man. With the help of some gold pieces he persuaded the latter to give him a drug which would produce a death-simulating sleep and which could be dispelled in a moment by the aid of another concoction. Having secured these he went and bought a long, false beard, a black gown, and all kinds of pots and phials, so that he might appear suitably equipped as a travelling physician, and, loading an ass with his things, he journeyed back to the castle of Thiuli-Kos. He felt certain now of not being recognised, for he was so completely concealed by his beard that he scarcely knew himself. Arrived at Thiuli he had himself

announced as the doctor Chakamankabudibaba, and everything happened as he had anticipated: the magnificence of the name recommended him to the old fool, who immediately sent to invite him to sit down to table with him. Chakamankabudibaba accepted, and they had hardly been talking an hour together before Thiuli had decided to submit all his female slaves to the professional treatment of this clever physician. The latter could hardly conceal the joy he felt at the thought of again seeing his dear sister, and it was with a palpitating heart that he followed Thiuli into the Seraglio. The room they entered was beautifully decorated, but no one was to be seen.

“Chambaba, or whatever your name may be, dear doctor,” said Thiuli-Kos, “you see that hole there in the wall; each of my female slaves will put her arm through it that you may feel her pulse and see if it is beating healthfully or not.”

Mustapha, urge what reasons he might, was not allowed to see the slaves, but Thiuli consented in each case to report on the usual state of health. Thiuli now drew a long list out of his girdle, and began in a loud voice to call each slave in turn by name; whereupon each time a hand was thrust through the wall, and the physician felt the pulse. Six had thus been examined, and pronounced in good health, when “Fatme” was called out for the seventh, and a small, white hand was slipped through the wall. Trembling with joy Mustapha took hold of it, and with a serious countenance declared this slave to be decidedly ill. Thiuli was very much concerned at this intelligence, and begged his wise Chakamankabudibaba to prepare a medicine for her without delay. The physician went outside, and wrote on a small piece of paper: “Fatme,

I will save you if you can make up your mind to take a drug which will make you appear to be dead for two days ; I have the remedy by me which will bring you back to life. If you are willing you need only say : This draught has been of no use, and I shall understand that you consent."

He quickly returned to the room, where Thiuli was awaiting him. With him he brought a harmless draught which, after again feeling Fatme's pulse, and taking the opportunity of slipping the paper under her bracelet, he passed to her through the wall. Thiuli appeared to be in the greatest anxiety about Fatme, and deferred the examination of the others to a more opportune time. After he and Mustapha had left the room he said in a melancholy voice :

"Chadibaba, tell me truly, what do you really think about Fatme's illness ?"

Chakamankabudibaba answered with a deep sigh : "Ah, dear sir—may the Prophet grant you consolation—she is suffering from a slow fever which may, perhaps, cause her death."

Then Thiuli's anger flamed up : "What is that you say, cursed dog of a doctor ? That she, for whom I paid two thousand gold pieces, is going to die like a cow ? Know, if you do not save her, I will have your head off !"

My brother saw that he had been guilty of a blunder, and began to give Thiuli some hope. While they were thus talking together a black slave came from the Seraglio with a message to the doctor that "the draught had been of no good."

"Summon up all the best of your art, Chakam-dabadelda, or whatever you call yourself ; I will pay you any sum you ask," screamed Thiuli-Kos, almost

howling with anguish at the thought of losing so much money.

"I will prepare a soothing draught for her which will not fail to give her ease," answered the doctor.

"Yes! yes! give her a soothing draught," sobbed old Thiuli.

Mustapha went off, well pleased to prepare his sleeping draught, and when he had given it to the black slave, with directions as to how much was to be taken at a time, he went back to Thiuli, and told him that he must now go and gather some healing herbs that grew beside the lake, and he then hurried off to the entrance gate. Having reached the lake, which was only a short distance from the castle, he tore off all his false clothing and threw it into the water, where it went bobbing about; while he hastened to hide himself among the bushes, and there waited for night to fall, when he stole into the burial-place, which adjoined the castle.

Mustapha had been absent from the castle hardly an hour when the news was brought to Thiuli that his slave Fatme was lying at the point of death. He sent someone off at once to the lakeside to bring the doctor back as quickly as possible; but his messenger returned, very shortly, alone to tell him that the poor physician had fallen into the water and been drowned, for his black robe could be seen floating about in the lake, and every now and then his flowing beard appeared above the surface. Seeing that there was now no further help to be got from any quarter Thiuli, cursing himself and the whole world, tore his beard, and ran his head against the wall. All this, however, was of no avail, for Fatme, attended upon by the remaining women, soon breathed her last. On being told that

all was over he ordered a coffin to be made at once, for he could not bear a dead body to remain in the house, and then had the corpse carried into the burial-place. The bearers, having put down the coffin there, turned and fled, for they heard groans and sighs issuing from among the other coffins.

Mustapha, who was hiding himself among these, and had frightened away the bearers, now stole out, and lit a lamp which he had taken with him for the purpose. He then drew out a bottle, which contained the restorative, and lifted the lid of Fatme's coffin. But what words can describe his horror and amazement when the lamp revealed to him entirely unfamiliar features! Neither his sister nor Zoraide but another whom he knew not was lying before him in the coffin. It took him some time to recover from this fresh stroke of cruel fate. Compassion, however, at last overpowered his anger; he opened the bottle, and poured the medicine down the woman's throat; she gave a sigh, opened her eyes, and then lay for some minutes, as if trying to think where she could be. By degrees the past events came back to her, and she rose from the coffin, and threw herself at Mustapha's feet.

"How can I thank you, my kind deliverer," she exclaimed, "for having enabled me to escape from my dreadful imprisonment?"

But Mustapha interrupted her words of gratitude with the question as to how it was that she, and not his sister Fatme, had been saved.

The woman looked at him in astonishment. "Now, at last, I understand why you rescued me, which I could not before explain to myself," she answered. "You must know that I was also called Fatme in the

castle, and it was to me you gave the slip of paper and the sleeping draught."

My brother implored the rescued one to give him particulars concerning his sister and Zoraide, and learnt that they were both inside the castle; but, according to Thiuli's custom, he had given them other names: they were now called Mirza and Nurmahal.

Seeing my brother so downcast at this mistake, the girl tried to encourage him, and said she knew of a way which would yet enable him to save the two girls. Aroused from his depression by this intelligence Mustapha's hopes revived, and he begged her to let him know what she proposed; and she explained as follows:—

"It is not more than five months since I became Thiuli's slave, but from the very first I made up my mind to escape; all the ways I thought of, however, were too difficult for me to carry out by myself. You will have noticed that in the inner court of the castle there is a fountain which sends out its water from ten mouths; this fountain suggested an idea to me. I remembered to have seen a similar one in my father's house, the water of which was brought to it along a wide conduit, and, in order to find out if this one were built in the same way, I began praising its beauty to Thiuli one day, and asked him who was the architect of it.

"‘I built it myself,’ he answered; ‘and what you see here is the least part of it, for the water is brought to it from a stream at least a thousand yards away, along a long, vaulted conduit, high enough for a man to walk in, if not higher—and all this I designed myself.’ After hearing this I wished many a time that I had the strength of a man, if only for a few

minutes, that I might be able to lift one of the stones beside the fountain, for then I could have fled whither I would. I can now show you this conduit, and you will be able to steal through it into the castle, and set the others free. You must, however, have at least two men with you, so as to overpower the slaves who keep guard all night."

This was her tale, and my brother, notwithstanding that his hopes had twice been dashed to the ground, again plucked up courage, trusting that, with Allah's help he might be able to carry out this new plan. He promised to look after the girl and to see that she got safely home if she would help him to get into the castle. His one great anxiety now was how to find two or three trusty associates in the work of rescue; then he suddenly remembered Orbasan's dagger, and the promise the latter had made him to hasten to his help should he at any time stand in need of it, and he immediately started off with the slave girl to try to find the robber.

They came to the town where Mustapha had transformed himself into a physician, and there he spent his last money in buying a horse and paying for Fatme's lodging with a poor woman living in the suburbs. He himself, however, hurried on towards the mountains where he had first met Orbasan, and in three days' time he had reached the spot. He found the tents again, and stepped, unannounced, into the presence of Orbasan, who gave him a friendly welcome. Mustapha told him how all his attempts had miscarried, and Orbasan, with all his seriousness, could not help laughing now and then, particularly when he heard of the Physician Chakamankabudibaba. He was enraged, however, at the treachery of the Little One, and swore,

if he found him, to hang him with his own hand, but he gave a ready promise to my brother to give him immediate help as soon as he had rested from his journey. Mustapha, therefore, remained that night in the tent; but with the first glimmer of dawn they started off, Orbasan taking with him three of his stoutest men, well mounted and well armed. They rode hard, and at the end of two days came to the small town where Mustapha had left the slave girl, whom they now took with them. They continued their journey until they reached a wood within sight of the castle of Thiuli, and here they encamped to wait for the night. As soon as it was dark they stole along to the side of the brook where the conduit began, Fatme serving as guide. They had no difficulty in finding it, and they now left Fatme and one of the men with the horses, and prepared to descend; before starting, however, Fatme once more gave them minute directions as to how they were to go. On coming to the fountain they would find themselves in the inner court; to the right and left of this there were two corner towers; and the sixth door from the right-hand tower led into the room where Fatme and Zoraide slept, guarded by two black slaves. Mustapha, Orbasan, and two other men, well armed with weapons and crowbars, now began their journey. They sank up to their middles in water, but, nevertheless, went stoutly on, and in about half-an-hour's time they came to the fountain, and began to apply their crowbars. The wall was thick and strongly built; but it could not long withstand the united strength of the four men, and they had soon made an opening big enough to slip through without difficulty. Orbasan got through first, and then helped the others; and now,

being all landed in the court, they looked along the side of the castle which faced them to find out the door that had been described. But they could not agree as to which it ought to be; for, counting from the tower to the right, they arrived at a door that had been walled up, and they could not tell whether Fatme had overlooked this or counted it in. Orbasan, however, did not take long to consider. "My good sword shall open every door for me," he cried, and he made straight for the sixth door, the others following. They opened the door, and saw six black slaves lying on the ground fast asleep. They were about to retire softly, seeing that they had made a mistake, when a figure in one of the corners rose up, and, in a well-known voice, began calling out for help. It was the little man from Orbasan's camp; but, before the slaves had time to realise what was happening, Orbasan rushed down on him, tore his girdle in two, gagged his mouth, and tied his hands behind his back. Then he turned to the slaves, half of whom had already been bound by Mustapha and the other men, and soon succeeded in overpowering them. Holding their daggers to their breasts, they now forced the slaves to reveal the room in which Mirza and Nurmahal were sleeping, and were directed to the adjoining one. Mustapha rushed in, and found Fatme and Zoraide awakened by the noise. They quickly gathered their clothes and ornaments together, and followed Mustapha. The two robbers proposed to carry away what they could find as booty, but Orbasan would not hear of this. "He would not give occasion," so he said, "for anyone to say that Orbasan stole by night into people's houses to take their money."

Mustapha and the two fugitives slipped quickly

down into the conduit, Orbasan promising to follow them in a minute or two. As soon as the former had disappeared, Orbasan and one of the robbers led the Little One into the court ; there they tied a silk cord, which they had brought for the purpose, round his throat, and slung him up to the highest point of the fountain. Having thus awarded him the rightful meed of his treachery, they followed Mustapha into the conduit. The two girls stopped to thank their noble deliverer with tears in their eyes, but Orbasan urged them to flee as quickly as possible, as Thiuli-Kos would probably send in all directions in pursuit of them. It was with feelings of great emotion next morning that Mustapha and the rescued girls separated from Orbasan. In truth, they could never, as they declared, forget him.

Fatme, the freed slave girl, went on to Balsora, disguised, to take ship there for her home. My own people also reached home safely after a short and prosperous journey. My old father nearly died of joy on seeing them again, and on the day after their return he gave a large entertainment, to which the whole town was invited. My brother had to relate the tale of his adventures before the assembled company of friends and relations, who were unanimous in lauding both him and the generous-hearted robber chief.

On the conclusion of his narration my father rose, and taking Zoraide by the hand, led her up to my brother. "My son," he said, "I now remove the curse from your head ; receive Zoraide from me as the reward which you have richly earned by your zealous and indefatigable efforts ; take also my paternal blessing, and may there never be wanting in our town

men who resemble you in brotherly love, prudence, and zeal."

The caravan had now reached the confines of the desert, and it was with feelings of delight that the travellers greeted the sight of the green meadows and shady trees, of which they had been deprived for so long. They came upon an inn standing in a beautiful valley, and here they arranged to stay for the night ; it did not, it is true, offer much in the way of comfort and refreshment, but the thought of having come safely to their journey's end through all the dangers and difficulties of the desert, had put the whole company into such cheerfulness and satisfaction of spirit, that their hearts were attuned to any kind of pleasure or amusement. Muley, the gay young merchant, performed a comic dance and sang songs, which provoked a smile from even the grave Greek Zaleukos. Muley was not satisfied, however, in entertaining his companions with dance and joke, but also related to them the tale which he had promised, and, having recovered from the exertion of his skips and jumps, began

THE TALE OF LITTLE MUCK

IN my native town of Nicea lived a man known as little Muck. Although I was very young at that time I can still recall him distinctly, and particularly remember him as having been the cause of my father on one occasion nearly beating me to death. Little Muck was already an old man when I knew him, but not above three or four feet in height ; he had, more-

over, a most peculiar figure, for, although his body was small and slender, he carried a head bigger and heavier than that of anyone else. He lived quite alone in a large house, and did all his own cooking, and no one in the town would have known whether he was alive or dead, as he only went out of doors once a month, if it had not been for the thick smoke which rose from his house every day at noon, and that he could be seen in the evening walking up and down on his roof, the appearance from the street giving that only his head was running about. I and my young companions were mischievous boys, who loved to tease everybody, and to make fun of them, and it was always a day of amusement to us when little Muck went out. We used to assemble before his house and wait for him to come out, and when at last the door opened—and first the large head, with its still larger turban, appeared, and then the little body clad in its shabby cloak, wide trousers, and broad girdle, from which hung a long dagger, so long that one could not say whether the dagger were fastened to him or he to the dagger—then we filled the air with our shouts of delight, threw up our caps, and danced round about him like mad things. But little Muck only greeted us with a grave bow of his head, and went slowly on down the street, shuffling as he walked; for he wore large, loose slippers, bigger than I have ever seen elsewhere. We boys would run after him, calling out: “Little Muck, little Muck!” and we had also a comic verse of poetry, which we sang now and again:

“Little Muck, little Muck,
At home thou hast no lack of space,
Once a month doth show thy face,

Art a famous dwarf, all said,
With a mountain for thy head ;
Look behind you, little man,
Run and catch us if you can."

We had amused ourselves with this game of ours for some time, and, to my shame be it said, I was one of the foremost in pursuing it ; for I used often to hang on to his cloak, and at last one day I went behind him, and trod on his slippers, so that he fell. This seemed to me a capital joke, but I left off laughing when I saw little Muck going towards my father's house. He went straight in, and remained there some time. I hid myself behind the door, and saw him come out again, accompanied by my father, who held him respectfully by the hand, and parted from him with many bows. I did not feel very comfortable after this, and remained in my hiding-place until hunger, which I dreaded even more than blows, drove me forth, and I went and stood humbly and with bent head before my father.

" You have, I hear, been insulting kind, good Muck," he said, in his severest tone. " I will tell you Muck's tale, and you will not again laugh at him ; but both before and after you will receive the usual punishment," —the usual punishment being five-and-twenty stripes, which my father always counted with unerring exactness. Whereupon he took a long tobacco-pipe tube, screwed off the amber mouthpiece, and laid on to me with more than customary vigour. When the five and twenty had been duly administered he ordered me to pay attention, and then related to me the history of little Muck :

Little Muck's father, whose actual name was Mukrah,

was a man of position, but poor, living here in Nicea. He led almost as hermit-like a life as his son. He could not bear the sight of the latter, for he was ashamed of his being a dwarf, and he let him grow up in ignorance. Little Muck was still but a merry little fellow when sixteen years of age, and his father, who was a serious-minded man, was wont to scold him for being so trifling and silly, now that he was no longer a child.

The old man, however, had a bad fall one day, from the consequences of which he died, leaving little Muck behind poor and uneducated. The cruel relations, to whom the deceased owed more than there was money to pay, drove the poor boy out of the house, and advised him to go out into the world to seek his fortune. Little Muck answered that he was quite ready to start on his travels ; all he asked for was his father's dress, and this was given him. Now, as his father had been a tall, big man, his clothes did not fit him very well. But Muck was at no loss what to do ; where they were too long he cut a piece off, and then put them on. He had forgotten, however, that they also required lessening in the breadth, and hence the peculiar-looking costume in which he still appears. The large turban, the broad girdle, the loose stockings, the blue cloak—all these are heirlooms from his father, which he has worn ever since ; the long Damascus dagger, also his father's, he stuck into his girdle, and, taking a short stick, he passed out over the threshold of his home.

He wandered happily about the whole day ; for had he not started forth to seek his fortune ? If he saw a bit of broken pot upon the ground shining in the sun he did not fail to put it into his pocket, in the belief that it would turn into the finest diamond ;

the sparkling dome of a mosque in the distance appeared to him like the bright surface of a lake, and he hurried joyfully towards it, for he thought that he must have come to some fairy land. But, alas ! all these delightful phantoms vanished as he approached them, and too soon his fatigue, and the hunger gnawing at his vitals, reminded him that he was still in the world of mortals. He went about like this for two days, in company with his hunger and distress, and began to despair of finding his fortune : wild fruits were his only food, the hard earth his bed. On the morning of the third day he came to a height, and suddenly saw a large town in front of him ; the crescent flashed above its battlements, bright pennons floated gaily over its roofs, and everything seemed to beckon little Muck. Surprised and overcome, little Muck stood still, gazing at the town and the surrounding country.

" Yes ; there little Muck will find his fortune," he said to himself, and, in spite of his weariness, he gave a leap of joy—" there or nowhere." He gathered all his remaining strength together, and started towards the town, but, although it had appeared quite near, it was going on for midday when he reached it ; for his legs almost refused to do their duty, and he was obliged to sit down at intervals under the shade of a palm-tree to rest. At last, however, he came to the gates ; he straightened his cloak, wound his turban more becomingly around his head, arranged his girdle to look broader than ever, and stuck his dagger more aslant ; then he wiped the dust from his shoes, seized his stick, and walked boldly into the town. He had already gone along several of the streets, but as yet no one had opened to him, no one had called to him :

"Little Muck, come in, and eat and drink, and give your little feet a rest!" when, just as he was looking longingly at a large and beautiful house, a window was thrown open, and an old woman looked out, calling in a sing-song voice :

"Come forth, come forth,
And taste my broth ;
It is already made,
And the table is laid ;
Neighbours, come forth,
And eat up my broth."

The door of the house opened, and Muck saw several dogs and cats going in. He stood for a moment or two in doubt whether he too would accept the invitation, but finally took courage, and walked in. He saw two young kittens in front of him, and, thinking that they probably knew the way to the kitchen better than he did, he decided to follow them.

As Muck reached the top of the stairs he came face to face with the old woman whom he had seen looking out of the window. She scowled at him, and asked him what he wanted.

"You invited everybody in to taste your broth," answered little Muck, "and as I was so desperately hungry I came in too."

The old woman laughed, and said : "Whence come you, you droll little fellow ? The whole town knows that I do not cook for anybody but my beloved cats, and now and then, as you see, I invite the company of those in the neighbourhood."

Little Muck then told her how badly things had gone with him after his father's death, and begged her,

for that day at least, to let him eat with her cats. The old woman, who was pleased with his frank recital, made him her guest, and plentifully supplied him with food and drink. When he had satisfied himself, and was feeling revived, the old woman, who had been looking at him for a long time, said: "Little Muck, stay and take service with me; you will have but light work, and will be well treated."

Little Muck, who had found the cats' broth very much to his taste, consented, and so became Madam Ahavzi's servant. He had easy but singular duties to perform. Madam Ahavzi had six cats, two of which were tom-cats, and every morning little Muck had to comb their fur, and rub in costly ointment; when the old lady went out he had to look after them, and, when they ate, to place the dishes before them, and at night to put them to bed on silk cushions, and wrap them up in velvet coverlets. Besides these, there were some little dogs in the house, which he had to attend upon; but there was not so much fuss made over these as over the cats, which Madam Ahavzi looked upon quite as her own children. Muck lived as lonely a life as in his father's house, for beyond his mistress and the cats and dogs he saw no one from day to day.

For some time all went well with little Muck; he always had plenty to eat and very little work, and the old lady seemed in every way pleased with him. The cats, however, became more and more troublesome; when their mistress was out they leaped about the rooms as if possessed, threw things in all directions, and broke many handsome dishes; when they heard her coming upstairs, however, they went and lay down on their cushions, and began wagging their tails,

as if nothing had happened. But Madam Ahavzi grew very angry when she saw the havoc that had been made in the rooms, and threw the blame of everything on Muck, and, protest as he might as to his innocence, she believed her cats, who looked so guiltless, sooner than her servant.

And now little Muck felt very unhappy, seeing that even here he had not found his fortune, and he inwardly determined to quit Madam Ahavzi's service. Remembering, however, what painful experiences he had gone through from the lack of money during his first journey he made up his mind that he would somehow or other get hold of the money which she had promised, but never given him, for his wages. There was one room in the house which was always kept locked, the inside of which Muck had never seen, although he had frequently heard Madam Ahavzi moving about in it, and had often felt that he would give a great deal to know what she had hidden there. As he sat considering about the money that he should want for his journey it occurred to him that possibly it was in that room that she hid her cash and valuables; but the door remained firmly closed, and he could not get at them. One morning, after Madam Ahavzi had gone out, one of the dogs, that she treated in rather a stepmotherly fashion, although he richly deserved her favour in return for many of his friendly services, came and took hold of Muck by his wide trousers, at the same time making gestures to show that he wanted Muck to follow him. Muck, who was fond of playing with the dog, went after him, and what should the little thing do but lead him into Madam Ahavzi's sleeping-room and up to a little door which he had never before noticed. He quickly opened it, and went in after the dog, and

he was agreeably surprised to find that he was in the very room which he had so long been desirous of entering. He went prying about to try if he could find money anywhere, but could see nothing except old clothes and curiously-shaped vessels. One of these in particular attracted his attention ; it was made of crystal, and had beautiful figures carved upon it. He lifted it up, and turned it round so as to examine it on all sides, when, horror ! he had not noticed that there was a cover to it, and, this being but shallow, now fell to the ground, and broke into a thousand pieces.

Little Muck stood for some time unable to move. His fate was now settled : he must fly, or his old mistress would slay him. He forthwith determined to start, and thought he would only give one more look round to see if there were anything among Madam Ahavzi's property which would be useful to him on his journey. An immense pair of slippers caught his eye ; they were certainly not beautiful, but his own were not in a condition to go with him on another journey ; and, indeed, it was their very size which so attracted him, for with these slippers on everybody would, it was to be hoped, see that he was no longer a child. So he quickly drew off his own small slippers and got into the large ones. Then a walking-stick with a lion's head finely carved on the top struck him as standing useless in the corner, so he took that also, and hurried out of the room. He went to his own room, and as fast as possible put on his cloak, set the paternal turban on his head, stuck the dagger into his girdle, and ran as fast as his legs would carry him out of the house and out of the town. Once outside he still went on running, in terror of his old mistress, until he was almost dead with fatigue. He had never gone so quickly before

in his life, and, indeed, he felt as if he should never be able to stop himself, and as if some unseen power were forcing him along. At last he became aware that the slippers seemed to be in the same condition, for they continued to shoot along the ground, carrying him with them. He tried his utmost to stand still, but in vain; then in his distress he called out to himself: "Wo-o-ah," as one does to horses, whereupon the slippers stopped running, and Muck threw himself exhausted on the ground. He was uncommonly delighted with the slippers; he had after all, then, he thought, gained something by his service, which would help, as he went his way through the world; to make his fortune. In spite of his pleasure, however, he fell asleep from sheer exhaustion; for little Muck's small body, which had to carry such a heavy head, could not stand much exertion. While sleeping he dreamt that Madam Ahavzi's little dog, that had helped him to the slippers, spoke to him, and said: "Dear Muck, you do not rightly understand the use of those slippers. Know then, that if when you have them on you turn round on your heel three times you can fly to whatever place you like; with the stick you can discover where money is buried, for it will knock on the earth three times for gold and twice for silver." Thus little Muck dreamed, and when he awoke he thought of this strange dream, and determined to try the truth of it at once. So he put on the slippers, and, lifting one foot, began to turn round on his heel. Whoever has tried to perform this feat in an enormously wide slipper will not be surprised to hear that little Muck was not immediately successful, particularly if it is taken into consideration that his large head went tumbling over first one way and then another.

The poor little man had several bad falls on his nose, but still he was not to be discouraged, and he continued in his attempts until he at last succeeded. He went turning round like a wheel on his heel, at the same time wishing himself in the nearest large town, and up went the slippers into the air, soaring along through the clouds with the swiftness of the wind, and before little Muck could think where he was, and what had happened, he found himself in a market-place where a number of booths were erected and an endless stream of people were busily passing backward and forward. He went in and out among them, but decided that it would be better to retire into one of the more secluded streets; for here in the market-place first someone trod on his slippers, so that he nearly fell, and next he ran against this one or that with his dagger, which stuck out some distance from his person, so that he narrowly escaped receiving blows.

Little Muck now began seriously to consider what he could be about so as to earn some money. It was true that he had a stick that would show him where treasure was hidden; but, then, where was he all in a minute to find a place where gold and silver were buried? He could also, he knew, earn enough for his wants by making an exhibition of himself, but his pride forbade him to do this. At last the thought of his wonderful shoes occurred to him; they might, perhaps, win a living for him, and he thereupon made up his mind to hire himself out as a runner. Thinking that the King would probably be the one to pay best for service of this kind he asked the way to the palace. On coming up to the gates a sentinel, who was stationed there, asked him what he wanted, and upon his answering that he had come to seek work he was directed to

go to the overseer of the slaves. He explained to the latter the service he offered, and begged him to obtain him a post among the King's messengers.

The overseer looked at him from head to foot. "What!" he said, "you with your little feet hardly a span long—you ask to be taken on as one of the royal runners? Be off with you; I am not here to waste my time with every fool that presents himself."

But little Muck assured him that he was perfectly serious in making his request, and that he would run for a wager with the quickest. The whole thing struck the overseer as highly amusing, and he ordered him to be in readiness to run a race that evening, and meanwhile took him into the kitchen, and saw that he had what he wanted in the way of food and drink. He went himself to the King, and told him of the dwarf and what he proposed to do. The King was a gay sort of person, and delighted that the overseer had detained little Muck to make some sport for him. He ordered all preparation to be made in a large meadow behind the castle, so that the whole of his Court might have a good sight of the races, and bade the overseer, also, to take every care of the dwarf. The King went and told the princes and princesses of the entertainment preparing for them, and these repeated the news to their retainers, so that by evening everybody had reached the highest pitch of expectation, and all who had legs to go upon, flocked into the meadow, where stands had been erected, whence the boastful dwarf could be seen as he ran.

When the King and his sons and daughters had taken their seats little Muck stepped into the meadow, and bowed before their highnesses in quite an elegant manner. A shout of amusement from all sides was

heard as the little figure came in sight, for nothing like it had ever been seen there before. The tiny body with the huge head, the little cloak and the wide trousers, the long dagger in the broad girdle, the small feet in the immense slippers—no, indeed! It was all too droll, and quite impossible for anyone not to laugh. Little Muck was not going to let himself be put out of countenance by the laughter; he walked proudly to his place, and waited, leaning on his stick, for his opponent to appear. In accordance with Muck's desire, the overseer had chosen the best among the runners to race with him; the man now came out, and placed himself beside the dwarf, and they both stood waiting for the signal to start. As prearranged, the Princess Amarza waved her veil, and like two arrows shot at the same mark the racers both flew across the meadow.

Muck's rival had the start of him at first, and got considerably ahead; but Muck pursued him with his slippers, as if on wheels, overtook him, passed him, and had been at the goal some time before the other came up, panting for breath. The spectators looked on, their eyes riveted with surprise and astonishment, but as soon as the King clapped his hands the whole throng began loudly to cheer, calling out: "Hurrah for little Muck, the victor in the race!"

Little Muck had now been conducted to the King. He threw himself down before him, saying: "Most high and mighty King, I have given you to-day but a small proof of my powers. I pray you to grant me a post among your runners." But the King answered him: "No; you shall be my own private messenger, and I will keep you about my person, dear Muck; as wages you shall receive a hundred gold pieces yearly, and you shall sit at table with my head attendants."

So little Muck thought that he had at last found his fortune, of which he had been so long in search, and he was cheerful and well content at heart. He was glad also at being picked out by the King for such special favour; for the latter sent him on all his most private messages, as well as on those requiring the greatest speed, and he fulfilled all his missions with the utmost accuracy and with incredible swiftness.

The other attendants of the King, however, were not so well disposed towards him, for they were not pleased at being superseded in the favour of the King by a dwarf who knew how to run quickly and that was all. They accordingly hatched several conspiracies with a view to bringing about his downfall, but they all failed on account of the perfect confidence which the King placed in his Master-in-Chief of the private runners, for to this dignity had Muck in so short a time attained.

Muck, who was well aware of what was going on, had much too kind a heart to harbour any thought of revenge, and only sought for some means whereby to make himself beloved by his enemies and of use to them. Being so well off he had forgotten about his stick, but now it suddenly occurred to him that if he could find some treasure the lordly gentlemen would assuredly feel better inclined towards him. He had often been told that the King's father had buried a great quantity of treasure when his land was invaded by the enemy; and, moreover, he had heard that the old King had died at that time without revealing the place of hiding to his son. So after this Muck took his stick with him wherever he went, in the hope that he might one day pass over the spot where the old King's treasure was hidden. One evening he happened

by chance to be walking in a more secluded part of the royal gardens, which he seldom visited, and all at once he felt the stick in his hand give a jerk, and thrice it struck the ground. He knew well enough what this signified, and accordingly drew out his dagger, cut marks on the surrounding trees, and went quietly back to the castle ; he there procured himself a spade, and waited for the night to fall.

Digging for the treasure was harder work for little Muck than he had expected. His arms were much too weak for such a job, and the spade large and heavy, and he had only dug to a depth of two feet after labouring for a good two hours. At last, however, his spade struck against something hard, which rang like iron. He now began to dig more indefatigably than ever, and in a very little while he had uncovered a large iron lid, and, getting down himself into the hole to see what was underneath it, he found, sure enough, a pot full of gold pieces. To lift it, however, was quite an impossibility for his weakly strength, and he, therefore, crammed his trousers and girdle with as much gold as he could, and also filled his mantle, and then, carefully covering up the remainder, slung the burden over his shoulders. But if it had not been for his slippers Muck would have found himself incapable of stirring from the spot, so weighted down was he by the gold. As it was, he got back to his room unobserved, and hid the gold away under the cushions of his sofa.

When little Muck saw himself the possessor of so much money he thought that his enemies would now turn over a new leaf, and that he would have many patrons and warm adherents about the Court. And it is just here that we recognise how little care had

been expended on poor Muck's upbringing, or he would surely never have imagined that any real friends are to be won by gold ! Ah, if he had but put on his slippers and, with his cloak full of gold, gone off there and then ! The money which little Muck now began to disperse with such a liberal hand awakened the envy of his fellow-attendants. The head cook, Ahuli, gave it as his opinion that he was a coiner ; the overseer of the slaves, Achmed, that he had wheedled it out of the King. Archaz, the treasurer, however, who was his bitterest enemy, and who himself now and again had dipped his hand into the King's cashbox, said outright : " He has stolen it." To make sure of their point they consulted together, and one day the chief cupbearer appeared before the King with the most doleful expression of countenance. He made his miserable demeanour so palpable that the King at last asked him what was the matter.

" Alas ! " he answered, " I am in sorrow at having lost my lord's favour."

" What nonsense are you talking, friend Korchuz ? " replied the King. " Since when has the sun of my favour ceased to shine upon you ? "

The chief cupbearer made answer that the King loaded his chief runner with gold and gave his poor, faithful servant nothing.

This news was a surprise to the King, and he made inquiries concerning all this lavish expenditure on the part of little Muck, and the conspirators had little difficulty in arousing his suspicion that Muck in some way or other had found his way to the treasury. This turn of affairs just suited the treasurer, who was not prepared just then to make up accounts. The King gave orders for watch to be kept on Muck's move-

ments, so that, if possible, he might be caught in the act. Accordingly, on the night that followed this ill-fated day, when little Muck, whose prodigality had brought him to the end of his money, took his spade, and slipped out into the garden to renew his store from the hidden treasure he was secretly followed by the night sentinels, headed by the head cook, Ahuli, and Archaz, the treasurer, and just as he was going to fill his cloak from the pot these fell upon him, bound him, and carried him before the King. The latter, who was doubly grumpy at having his sleep broken in upon, received the poor Master-in-Chief of the runners in anything but a gracious manner, and arranged to have the case tried on the spot. The pot had been taken up out of the ground, and this, with the spade and the little cloak filled with gold, were laid before the King. The treasurer declared that he and the watch had surprised Muck just as he was burying this pot with gold in the ground.

The King then questioned the accused as to whether this were true, and where he had found the gold that he was about to bury.

Little Muck, aware of his innocence, replied that he had discovered the pot in the garden, and that he had not wished to bury it but to dig it out.

All those who were present laughed loudly on hearing this confession, but the King, highly incensed at what he took for the impudence of the dwarf, exclaimed :

“What, you dishonest wretch ! you dare to lie in that stupid and shameless manner to your King after having first stolen his money ? Treasurer Archaz ! I ask you, does this sum of money correspond with what you miss in my treasury ? ”

The treasurer replied that he was perfectly sure of

the thing—that just that sum, and indeed more, had for some time been missing in the royal treasury, and he could take his oath that this gold was the stolen money. Whereupon the King commanded that little Muck be put in chains, and taken to the tower, while he handed over the gold to the treasurer to be replaced. Delighted at this fortunate termination of affairs the latter went off, and when he got home began counting the shining gold pieces. But the wicked man never noticed that there was a paper at the bottom of the pot, on which was written: “The enemy has overrun my country. I, therefore, am burying in this spot a portion of my riches; whoever finds the same, on him shall fall a king’s curse if he does not immediately restore it to my son.—KING SADI.”

Little Muck in his prison was engaged in melancholy reflection. Death, he knew, was the punishment for theft of royal belongings, and yet he did not dare to reveal the secret of his stick to the King, fearing, with reason, that he would be robbed of this and his slippers. Unfortunately, his slippers were just now of no help to him, for, as he was firmly chained to the wall, he could not anyhow, whatever painful efforts he might make, turn round on his heel. When, however, he was apprised next morning of the sentence of death upon him, he thought that it would assuredly be better to live without the stick than to die in possession of it, and he sent, therefore, and begged the King to grant him a private interview, and then told him the secret. The King, at first, refused credence to his confession, but little Muck promised to prove the truth of what he said if the King would grant him his life. The King gave him his word, then, unseen by Muck, had some gold buried in the earth, and ordered Muck to

find it with his stick. It was not long before the stick distinctly struck the earth three times; then the King knew that his treasurer had deceived him, and, as is the custom in the East, he sent him a silk cord wherewith to strangle himself. To little Muck, however, he said: "I have, it is true, promised to spare your life, but it strikes me that this secret about the stick is not the only one you possess; therefore you will remain in perpetual imprisonment if you do not confess what is at the back of your swiftness of running." His one night in the tower had taken away all desire from Muck of any longer imprisonment, and so he acknowledged that all his swiftness lay in his slippers, but he said nothing to the King of the further secret about turning round three times on one's heel. The King put the shoes on himself, to test them, and began rushing like a madman all about the garden; he wanted to stop himself, but did not know how to bring the slippers to a standstill, and little Muck, who felt he could not deny himself this small revenge, let him run till he fell down swooning.

When the King recovered his consciousness he was frightfully angry with little Muck for letting him go on running till he was so out of breath. "I have given you my word that you shall keep your life and liberty, but, before twelve hours are over, out of my country you go, or I will have you strung up." The stick and the slippers he commanded to be locked up in his treasury.

And now, poor as ever, little Muck wandered forth again, cursing his folly, which had led him to imagine that he was fit to play his part as a dignitary of the Court. The territory from which he was banished was, happily, but a small one, and within eight hours

he had reached the boundary, although, being accustomed to his beloved slippers, he found walking very troublesome. After he had crossed the boundary he left the main road, desirous of seeking the solitude of the thickest woods, and of living there to himself, for he bore a grudge against all his fellow-creatures. He came to a wood which appeared in every way to be the place he sought. A brook of clearest water, overshadowed by high, surrounding fig-trees with their thick foliage, and soft grass, offered an inviting retreat, and he threw himself down, determined not to taste again of food, but to lie here and await death. He fell asleep with melancholy thoughts of death, but when he awoke, and began to feel the pangs of hunger, he bethought him that a death from starvation was a terrible thing, and looked about him to see if there were anything to be found to eat.

Ripe, delicious figs were hanging on the trees under which he had been sleeping ; he climbed up to get some, ate them with an excellent appetite, and then went down to the brook to quench his thirst. But what was his horror to see the reflection of his head in the water adorned with two immense ears and a thick, long nose ! In terror he put up his hands to feel his ears—there was no mistake, they were nearly half-a-yard long.

“ I deserve to have ass’s ears ! ” he cried aloud, “ for I have trampled my fortune underfoot like an ass ! ”

He walked up and down under the fig-trees, and when he began to feel hungry again he was obliged again to have recourse to the figs, for he could see nothing else on the trees that was fit to eat. As he was eating his second portion of figs he began to wonder whether he might not, perhaps, be able to hide

his ears under his large turban, so as not to look quite such a laughing-stock, when, to his astonishment, he found they had disappeared. He ran back quickly to the brook, to assure himself that it was so, and, sure enough, his ears had resumed their normal shape, and his long, shapeless nose was no more to be seen. He now saw what had happened : the figs on the first tree had given him the long ears and nose, the figs on the second had taken them away, and so once more he joyfully recognised that kindly fate had again put it into his power to make his fortune. He thereupon gathered as many figs as he could carry from the two trees, and went straightway back into the country which he had just left. At the first village he came to he changed his clothes, and made himself quite unrecognisable, and then he walked on towards the town in which the King lived, and was not long in reaching it.

It happened to be just the season when ripe fruits were scarce, so little Muck took up his station under the gateway of the palace, for he knew from past experience that the chief cook was in the habit of coming there to buy dainties for the King's table. He had waited but a little while when he saw the chief cook coming his way across the courtyard ; arrived under the gateway he examined all that the various sellers had brought with them, and at last his eye fell on Muck's little basket. " Ah ! a scarce dainty," he said, " that His Majesty will highly relish ; what do you want for the whole basketful ? " Little Muck named a moderate price, and the bargain was soon completed. The chief cook handed the basket to one of the slaves, and went on ; little Muck, meantime, made off, for he feared that as soon as the catastrophe befell the

royal heads they would be after him, and he would get punished.

The King was in very good spirits at table, and repeatedly praised the chief cook for his excellent dinners and for the pains he took to try to procure the rarest dainties. The cook, who knew what a delicacy he had in reserve, gave an amiable smirk, and only let a word drop now and then, uttering enigmatic phrases such as "All's well that end's well," so that the princesses became very curious to know what he had yet to bring before them, but when he set the beautiful, inviting-looking figs on the table there was a general "Ah!" from the company.

"How ripe, how delicious!" cried the King. "Cook, you are a capital fellow, and deserve our most especial favour!"

So speaking, the King, with his own hand, for he was always very niggardly with such luxuries, divided the figs among those at his table; each prince and each princess was allowed two; the ladies of the Court, the viziers, and officers of high rank had one apiece; while the remainder he took for himself, swallowing them with great enjoyment.

But, all of a sudden, the Princess Amarza called out: "Gracious heavens! how extraordinary you look, father."

Everybody now turned, and gazed on the King in astonishment; for immense ears were hanging on each side of his head, a long nose depended over his chin, and then they all began staring at each other in wonder and alarm, for each one was more or less adorned with these singular appendages. One may imagine the dismay that reigned throughout the Court! All the doctors in the town were immediately sent for; they

came in crowds, ordered pills and mixtures, but the ears and noses remained. They operated on one of the princes, but the ears grew again.

Muck, in the hiding-place to which he had retired, did not remain in ignorance of all that was going on, and he decided that the time had come to act. With the money he had already got from the sale of the figs he had been able to procure himself an outfit which gave him the air of a professional ; a long beard made of goat's hair completed the disguise. Taking with him a little bag of figs he went to the palace, and, introducing himself as a physician from abroad, proffered his services. No one had much faith in him at first, but after Muck had given a fig to one of the princes, whose ears and nose immediately resumed their natural character, then everybody in the Court rushed to him to be cured. The King, however, took him silently by the hand into his room, and, flinging open the door that led into the treasury, made a sign to Muck to follow him.

"Here are all my valuables," said the King. "Choose what you will from among them, and it shall be yours, if only you will free me from this ignominious disfigurement."

The words fell like music on Muck's ears ; he had spied his slippers on the floor at the moment of entering the room, and near them lay his stick. He went round the room, as if admiring the King's beautiful things ; when he came to the slippers he quickly slipped his feet into them, and then, seizing his stick, and tearing off his false beard, he displayed to the astonished King the well-known face of the dwarf he had driven away.

"Faithless King," said the latter, "who rewardest

honest service with ingratitude, take as your well-deserved punishment, the deformity which now disfigures you. I leave you the ears, that you may daily be reminded of little Muck."

As he spoke these words he turned himself round three times on his heel, wished himself far away, and, before the King could summon help, had flown into the air, and disappeared. Since then, little Muck has lived here, a well-to-do but lonely life, for he despises all mankind. He has become wise from experience, and, however singular he may be in outward appearance, is deserving of your admiration rather than of your mockery.

Such was the tale told me by my father. I expressed my repentance at having behaved so roughly and rudely to the good little man, and my father remitted the second half of my intended punishment. I told my companions the wonderful history of little Muck, and we grew so fond of him that we never again offered him insult; on the contrary, we respected him as long as he lived, and used to bow as low before him as before the Cadi and Mufti.

The travellers decided that they would stay at the inn to give themselves and their animals a day's rest and refreshment before continuing their journey. The good spirits of the evening before lasted on through this extra period of waiting, and the merchants amused themselves with all kinds of games. On the termination of the midday meal, however, they called upon the fifth merchant, Ali Sizah, to fulfil his share of the compact, as the others had done, and to tell them a tale. His life, he said in reply, had been so devoid of striking incidents that he had nothing to tell about himself,

but he would relate something of another kind — the tale of the False Prince.

THE TALE OF THE FALSE PRINCE

ONCE upon a time there was a steady, upright young tailor's apprentice, by name Labakan, who was learning his trade under a clever master in Alexandria. It would have been impossible to say of Labakan that he was unskilful with his needle; on the contrary, he could do the most elegant work; neither would it have been just to accuse him of being lazy, for it would not have been exactly true, since he often worked for hours on end, without pausing, till his needle became red-hot and the thread smoked, and at such times he turned out work which was unequalled by that of any of the other apprentices; but on certain days, and, unfortunately, these occurred pretty often, he would sit, lost in thought, staring in front of him, and with something so singular in the expression of the whole face and person that the masters and apprentices always made the same remark about him when in this condition: "Labakan has got his grand air on again to-day."

On Fridays, when other people went quietly back after prayers to their own houses, to begin work again, Labakan issued from the mosque in a beautiful dress, which he had with great difficulty bought out of his savings, and with a slow and haughty step walked through the squares and streets, and if one of his friends met him and greeted him with a "Peace be with you," or "How goes it with you, friend Labakan?" he graciously waved his hand, or at the most nodded his

head in a lordly manner. And so, when the master, in fun, said to him : " We've lost a prince in you, Labakan," he was delighted, and answered, " You have noticed it too, then ? " or " I have thought so myself for a long time."

Labakan had been going on like this for some time, and his master had borne patiently with his folly, seeing that he was otherwise an honest young man and a clever worker, when one day, Selim, the Sultan's brother, who was passing through Alexandria, sent one of his dresses, which he wore on ceremonious occasions, to have some alterations made, and the master gave it to Labakan, he being able to do the finest work. In the evening, when the master and his workmen had left to amuse themselves after the burden of the day's work, an irresistible longing took hold of Labakan to return to the workroom, where the dress belonging to the Sultan's brother had been left hanging. He stood before it a long time, lost in delight and admiration, now of the glittering embroidery, now of the splendour of the colours of the velvet and silk. He felt he must put it on, and, lo ! if it did not fit him exactly, as if it had been made for him. " Am I not as good a prince as any other ? " he asked himself as he strutted up and down. " Did not the master himself say that I was born to be a prince ? " And with the clothes Labakan seemed to have put on quite a kingly frame of mind ; he could think of himself no otherwise than as the unknown son of a king, and as such he determined to go forth into the world, and to leave a place where the people had hitherto been so blind and foolish as not to recognise his inborn dignity beneath the mask of his low standing. He fancied that this splendid dress had been sent to him

by some kind fairy—he would be careful, therefore, not to despise so rich a gift—and so, taking with him the little ready money he possessed, and favoured by the darkness of the night, he passed out through the gates of Alexandria.

Wherever he went, in the course of his wanderings, the new prince awakened a great deal of curiosity, for the magnificence of his dress and the gravity and majesty of his bearing were not such as appeared suitable for an ordinary foot-passenger. When questioned about himself he always answered, with a mysterious air, that there were particular reasons for his travelling in this manner. Detecting, however, that he was making himself ridiculous by going about on foot he bought an old horse for a small price, which exactly suited his purpose, for its steady gait and docility of temper did not put him into the awkward position of having to show off as a good rider, which was not at all in his way.

One day, as he was jogging slowly along at a foot-pace, a horseman joined him, and asked if he might be allowed to journey in his company, as the way seemed so much shorter when there was somebody to talk with. The stranger was a cheerful young man, good-looking, and pleasant company. He had soon entered into familiar conversation with Labakan, asking whence he was and whither he was going, and it turned out that he also was making a start in the world without any settled plan. His name, he said, was Omar; he was the nephew of Elfi Bey, the unfortunate pasha of Cairo, and it was in order to carry out a commission entrusted to him by his uncle on his death-bed that he was now travelling about. Labakan was not so communicative as regards his own circumstances, and

gave his companion to understand that he was of high birth and was travelling for his amusement.

The two young men made friends with one another, and went on together. On the second day of their journey Labakan asked Omar what the commission was that he had received from his uncle, and, to his astonishment, was told as follows:—"Elfi Bey, the pasha of Cairo, had brought Omar up from his earliest childhood, and the latter had never known his parents. When Elfi Bey was attacked by his enemies, and after three disastrous battles had been forced to flee, mortally wounded, he confessed to Omar that the latter was not his nephew but the son of a powerful ruler, who, on account of what had been foretold him by his astrologer, had, in fear, sent the young prince away from the Court, swearing that he would not see him again until his two and twentieth birthday. Elfi Bey had not told him the name of his father, but had most urgently enjoined on him to be at the famous pillar, El-Serujah, four days' journey east of Alexandria, on the fourth day of the coming month of Ramadan, on which day he would be two and twenty years old; he was then to hand a dagger, which his uncle gave him, to the men he would find standing there, with the words: 'Here am I whom you seek'; if they answered 'Praise be to the Prophet, who hath preserved you,' then he was to follow them, and they would take him to his father."

The tailor's apprentice wondered greatly on hearing this story; he began to look with envious eyes on Prince Omar, and felt angry to think that fate should have bestowed upon the other, who was already the nephew of a powerful pasha, the further dignity of being a monarch's son, while he, who in every way

was fitted to be a prince, had been consigned to the ignominy of a low birth and an ordinary way of life. He compared himself with the prince, and was obliged to confess that he was a man of very pleasing countenance; fine, animated eyes, a handsome aquiline nose, a gentle and courteous manner—in short, he lacked none of the attractions of outward appearance which could help to recommend him. But, notwithstanding the many excellences which he was bound to acknowledge his companion possessed, he could not help admitting to himself that to the royal father a Labakan ought certainly to be more welcome than the actual prince.

Labakan was haunted by these thoughts all day, and he fell asleep with them in his mind; but when he awoke the following morning, and his eyes fell on Omar, who lay near him, sleeping peacefully, perhaps dreaming of his assured good fortune, a further thought took possession of him: why should he not endeavour to obtain by cunning or force that which ungracious fate had denied him? The dagger which was to be the sign of recognition of the home-returning prince was thrust into the sleeping man's girdle, and Labakan drew it gently forth, prepared to plunge it into the owner's breast. But the idea of murder made the peaceable soul of the apprentice shudder, and instead, therefore, he contented himself with sticking the dagger into his own girdle, bridling the swifter horse belonging to the prince, and ere Omar was awake, and had found out that he was robbed of all his hopes, his treacherous companion was already some miles in advance of him.

It was the first day of the holy month of Ramadan on which Labakan had perpetrated his robbery, and he had, therefore, four days in which to reach the pillar

of El-Serujah, which was well known to him. Although the place where the pillar stood was at the most another two days' journey off he yet hurried on, for he was in a state of perpetual fear lest Omar should overtake him.

Towards the close of the second day Labakan caught sight of the pillar of El-Serujah; it stood on a little elevation in the middle of a wide plain, and was discernible some miles off. Labakan's heart began to beat more loudly as the pillar came in view. Although he had had plenty of time during the last two days to think over the part he was going to play still his bad conscience gave him some uneasiness; but then, again, the thought that he was born to be a prince fortified his resolution, and he went on towards the goal feeling reassured.

The country surrounding the pillar was bare and uninhabited, and the new prince would have found himself in some difficulty as to obtaining food if he had not brought with him sufficient provisions for several days. So he encamped with his horse under some palm-trees, and there awaited his oncoming fate.

Towards noon the next day he saw a long procession of horses and camels coming over the plain towards the pillar. It came to a standstill at the foot of the hill on which the pillar stood; magnificent tents were pitched, and the whole thing looked like the travelling cortege of a rich pasha or sheik. Labakan guessed that it was on his account that all these people were bestirring themselves, and he would have liked to present them with their future master without delay; but he suppressed his longing to step forth as a prince, knowing that he had but to wait for the following morning and his most ambitious wishes would be fulfilled.

It was with a feeling of elation that the tailor awoke with the morning sun on the day that was to prove the most important one of his life—the day which was to lift him out of his humble station and place him beside a kingly father. It is true that as he was bridling his horse, preparatory to riding to the pillar, a sense of the unrighteousness of his act came over him, and he could not help picturing the trouble of the young prince at the betrayal of his dearest hopes; but the die had been cast, it was impossible now to undo what had been done, and his self-love whispered flatteringly to him that he looked fine and dignified enough to present himself before the mightiest of kings as his son. Encouraged by these thoughts he swung himself on to his horse, summoned up all his courage to let the beast go at an ordinary gallop, and in less than a quarter of an hour found himself at the foot of the hill. He dismounted, and fastened his horse to a shrub, there being many about the hill, and then, drawing out Prince Omar's dagger, began to climb up. At the base of the pillar were six men, standing on either side of an old man of lofty and regal mien; a gorgeous caftan of cloth of gold, girt round with a white cashmere shawl, and the white turban set with magnificent precious stones marked him out as a person of wealth and dignity.

Labakan went straight up to him, bent low before him, and said, as he handed him the dagger: "Here am I whom you seek."

"Praise be to the Prophet, who hath preserved you," answered the old man, with tears of joy. "Embrace your old father, my beloved son Omar!" The good tailor was very much overcome by these words, and sank with a mixture of pleasure and shame into the arms of the old King.

But it was only for a moment that he was to enjoy untroubled the delight of his new position ; even as he lifted himself out of the arms of the old man he caught sight of a rider hastening over the plain towards the pillar. Both rider and horse presented a most peculiar appearance ; the horse, either from obstinacy or fatigue, seemed unwilling to go forward ; it jogged along at a halting kind of pace, which was neither walking nor trotting, while the rider urged it on with hands and feet. Only too soon did Labakan recognise his old horse Murva and the rightful Prince Omar ; but the evil spirit of lying had been let loose within him, and he determined, come what might, to continue with brazen face to swear to the justice of his claim.

While still some way off the rider had been seen to be making signs, and now, in spite of the lagging pace of his horse, he had reached the foot of the hill, had thrown himself from his horse, and rushed up the height. "Stay," he cried, "whoever you may be, and do not let yourselves be deceived by this most shameful of pretenders ; my name is Omar, and no mortal shall dare to misuse it !"

Profound astonishment was depicted on the faces of the company at this turn of affairs ; the old man especially seemed greatly taken aback, and began looking from one to the other. But Labakan, forcing himself with a great effort to speak quietly, said : "Most gracious lord and father, do not let that man there in any way upset you with his words. As far as I know, he is a mad tailor's apprentice from Alexandria, called Labakan, who deserves our pity rather than our anger."

These words drove the prince into a perfect frenzy of rage. Foaming with anger he was about to throw

himself upon Labakan, but the bystanders intervened, and took hold of the prince, while his father said : " Truly, dear son, the poor man is out of his wits. Let him be bound, and placed on one of our dromedaries ; perhaps we may be able to obtain some help for the unfortunate creature."

The anger of the prince had now somewhat abated. Weeping, he addressed his father : " My heart tells me that you are my father, and, by the memory of my mother, I beseech you to hear me."

" Heaven forbid !" answered the King. " He has begun to rave again already ; what can bring such mad ideas into the man's head ! " Whereupon he took hold of Labakan's arm, and allowed himself to be led by the latter down the hill. They mounted side by side on richly-caparisoned horses, and rode together over the plain at the head of the procession. The unhappy prince meanwhile had his hands bound, and was placed on a dromedary, while someone rode on either side of him, keeping a watchful eye on all his movements.

The princely old man was Saud, the Sultan of the Wahabis ; for a long time he had been without children, but at last a prince was born, and the desire of his heart was fulfilled. The astrologers, however, whom he consulted regarding the fate of the boy pronounced as follows :—" That up to the time when he would be two and twenty, he would stand in danger of being supplanted by an enemy." The Sultan, theretore, to be on the safe side, had sent the prince to his old and tried friend Elfi Bey, and for two and twenty unhappy years had waited for a sight of his son.

All this the Sultan now told to his supposed son,

expressing himself as beyond measure pleased with his figure and dignified appearance.

When they reached the Sultan's domains they were greeted with joyous acclamations from all the inhabitants, for the rumour of the prince's advent had run like wild-fire through every town and village. The streets along which they rode were arched with flowers and boughs, the houses were decorated with bright carpets of all colours, and the people shouted praises to God and His Prophet for having sent them such a handsome prince. The proud heart of the tailor swelled with delight at all this, but it only added the more to the misery of the rightful Omar, who, still bound, followed the procession in the silence of despair. No one troubled himself about him in the midst of the general jubilation, although by rights it had chiefly to do with him. The name of Omar was shouted by thousands, and again by thousands, but he to whom the name belonged passed along unobserved, or if he was noticed at all it was only by one here and there, who asked who the man was who accompanied the procession as a prisoner in bonds, and the answer that it was a poor crazy tailor sounded hatefully in the prince's ears.

At last the procession had reached the Sultan's capital, where an even more magnificent reception awaited them. The Sultana, an elderly, venerable lady, was waiting to receive them in full state in the splendid throne-room of the castle. The floor of this room was covered with an immense carpet, and the walls were hung with pale blue cloth, bordered and tasselled with gold, and depending from large silver hooks.

It was already dark when the procession arrived,

and the room was lighted with round, coloured lamps, which made it as light as day. These were most brilliant and varied in colour at the farther end of the room, where the Sultana sat enthroned. Four steps led up to the throne, which was all of gold, and set with large amethysts. The four chief emirs upheld a *baldaquin* of red silk over the Sultana's head, and the Sheik of Medina wafted the cool air towards her with a large fan of peacocks' feathers.

Thus the Sultana sat awaiting her husband and son ; she too had not seen the latter since his birth, but the one so longed for had been shown to her in dreams of import, and she would have known him among a thousand. And now could be heard the noise of the approaching procession, the sound of trumpets and drums mingled with the shouts of the crowd, the horses' hoofs rang on the stones of the courtyard ; nearer and nearer came the rush of oncoming feet, the doors of the room were flung open, and between the rows of prostrate servants the Sultan, leading his son by the hand, hurried up to the throne whereon sat the mother.

" Here," he said, " I bring you the son for whom you have longed for so many years."

But the Sultana hardly allowed him to finish his sentence. " That is not my son," she cried ; " those are not the features which the Prophet has shown me in my dreams."

Just as the Sultan was about to upbraid his wife with her incredulity, the doors again burst open, and Prince Omar, followed by his keepers, from whom he had managed, only by the exertion of all his strength, to escape, rushed into the room and threw himself breathless before the throne : " Here will I remain and die. Let me be put to death, my cruel father, for

I will bear this shame no longer!" Whereupon a great commotion arose, and everybody came thronging round the unfortunate man, and the keepers who had rushed in with him were about to seize and fetter him again when the Sultana, who had looked on in speechless astonishment at the whole scene, rose from her throne. "Stay!" she cried. "This man and no other is my son; this is he whom my eyes have never seen but whom my heart has known!"

The keepers had involuntarily let go their hold of Omar, but the Sultan, furious with anger, ordered them to bind the madman. "I am the person to decide," he said in a commanding voice; "and we do not judge here according to women's dreams but according to sure and incontrovertible evidence. This man (pointing to Labakan) is my son, for he brought me the dagger, which was to be the token from my friend Elfi."

"He stole it," cried Omar; "he treacherously made use of the information which I unsuspectingly confided to him!"

But the Sultan was deaf to his son's voice, for he was accustomed in all matters to stick doggedly to his own opinions; he thereupon ordered Omar to be forcibly removed from the room. He himself repaired to his own room with Labakan, indignantly angry with the Sultana, with whom, for five and twenty years, he had always lived in peace.

The Sultana herself was greatly troubled about the whole matter; she was fully convinced that it was an impostor who had got possession of the Sultan's heart, for so many had been the dreams in which the other unfortunate man had been vividly revealed to her as her son.

When she had recovered a little from her trouble she began to turn over in her mind how she might convince her husband of his mistake. But this was difficult, for the man who gave himself out for his son had given the dagger, the token, to the Sultan, and had also, as she found out, learnt so much from Omar himself about his former life that he was able to play his part without betraying himself.

She summoned the men who had accompanied the Sultan to the pillar of El-Serujah, and got them to tell her exactly what had happened, and then held counsel with the trustiest of her female slaves. Such and such means were suggested, but she finally rejected them all, until Melechsallah, a cunning old Circassian, said: "If I understand rightly, honoured mistress, the man who brought the dagger called the one whom you believe to be your son Labakan, and said he was a tailor out of his wits?"

"Yes, that is so," answered the Sultana; "but what can you make of that?"

"Well, what if this impostor," continued the other, "has passed his own name on to your son?—and if this is so there is one capital way of catching him which I will tell you in strict secrecy."

The Sultana leaned forward her ear, and the slave whispered something which evidently seemed such good advice to the Sultana that she began at once to make herself ready to visit the Sultan.

The Sultana was a clever woman, who knew the Sultan's weak side and how to profit by this knowledge. She, therefore, pretended that she was willing to give in to him, and to acknowledge the supposed son, and only begged that she might be allowed to propose one condition. The Sultan, who was grieved at having

flown into such a passion with his wife, consented, and she then said: "I should like them both to be subjected to a test of their skill: any other person would, perhaps, ask that they should be allowed to ride or fight or throw the spear, but those are things which everyone can do. No; I should like to give them something to do which requires dexterity, so let them each have a caftan and a pair of trousers to make, and we will see who does it best."

The Sultan laughed. "Well, you have, indeed, hit upon a clever idea!" he said. "My son compete with your crazy tailor to see which can make the best caftan?—no; that won't do."

But the Sultana reminded him that he had promised her beforehand to accede to the condition she proposed, and so the Sultan, who was a man of his word, at last gave in, although at the same time he took his oath that, however beautifully the tailor made his caftan, he would not acknowledge him as his son.

The Sultan now went to his son, and begged him to comply with this whim of his mother, whom nothing else would satisfy but that she must see a caftan made by his own hands. Labakan, good man, laughed to himself. If that is all that is wanting, he joyfully thought, the Sultana shall soon have reason to rejoice over me.

The rooms were set apart for them—one for the prince, the other for the tailor—and there they were to prepare the proofs of their skill, for they had nothing given to them but the required amount of material, scissors, needle, and thread.

The Sultan was very curious to see what sort of a caftan his son would turn out; the Sultana also felt her heart beat with some uneasiness in case her cunning

device should fail. The rivals were allowed two days for the work, and on the third the Sultan sent for his wife, and, as soon as she arrived, the two men were brought forth from their rooms, bringing their caftans with them. Labakan stepped forward triumphantly, and spread out his caftan before the astonished eyes of the Sultan.

"Look, father," he cried, "look, honoured mother, and say if this caftan is not a masterpiece of work! I will lay a wager that the most skilled of your Court tailors could not make such another."

The Sultana smiled, and, turning to Omar, said: "And what sort of a thing have you turned out, my son?"

The latter threw his silk and scissors angrily on the ground.

"I was taught to master a horse and handle a sword, and I can hit the mark with my lance sixty paces off, but I am a stranger to the art of the needle, which would be an unfitting accomplishment for the pupil of Elfi Bey, the lord of Cairo."

"O thou true son of thy father," cried the Sultana, "alas! that I might but embrace thee and call thee son!"

Then, turning to the Sultan, she continued: "Forgive me, my husband, that I have used this stratagem against you. Do you not now see which is prince and which is tailor? The caftan that my lord your son has made is, indeed, a superb garment, and I should like to know under what master he acquired his skill."

The Sultan sat, brooding deeply, and glancing suspiciously first at his wife and then at Labakan, who, although he had turned red, and was dismayed at

having so foolishly betrayed himself, still tried to look unconcerned.

"I do not even consider this proof sufficient," he said; "but, thanks be to Allah, I know of another means whereby to ascertain whether or not I have been deceived."

He ordered his swiftest horse to be brought to him, and, mounting, he rode off to a wood situated but a short distance from the town. There, according to ancient report, lived a kind fairy, by name Adolzaide, who had often helped the kings belonging to his race with her advice; thither now the Sultan hastened.

In the middle of the wood was a clearing surrounded by tall cedar-trees; there, tradition said, lived the fairy, and it was seldom that a mortal ventured to approach this spot, for, from old times, a certain dread of the place had been passed on from father to son.

On arriving here the Sultan dismounted, and tied his horse to a tree, and then went and stood in the middle of the clearing, and called out in a loud voice: "If it is true that in their hour of need you helped my forebears with your good counsel, I pray you not to despise the petition of their descendant, but to grant me your advice where human understanding is too short-sighted to be of help."

The last words were hardly spoken, when one of the cedar-trees opened, and forth from it stepped the figure of a veiled woman in a long white garment.

"I know why you have come to seek me, Sultan Saud. Your desire is a just one; therefore you shall receive help from me. Take these two caskets; let each of the two who declare themselves your son choose one of them. I am certain that he who is the rightful heir will not make a mistake in his choice."

As the veiled figure so spoke she handed the Sultan two small ivory caskets, richly ornamented with gold and pearls, while on the covers, which the Sultan tried in vain to lift, were inscriptions written in diamonds.

As the Sultan was riding home he cudgelled his brains to think what could be inside the caskets, which he could not succeed in opening. The inscriptions threw no light on the matter, for on one was written "Honour and Renown" and on the other "Happiness and Riches"; and the Sultan confessed to himself that, had he to choose, he would find it very difficult to decide between these two offers, both equally tempting. He sent for the Sultana as soon as he reached home, and told her the instructions he had received from the fairy, and she felt a strong hope rise within her that the one whom her heart instinctively claimed as her son would choose the casket that was to prove his princely descent.

Two tables were now placed in front of the Sultan, and he with his own hand placed the caskets upon them, and then, reascending his throne, made a sign to one of his slaves, who threw open the doors, and at once entered a splendid array of pashas and emirs from different parts of the realm, whom the Sultan had summoned thither for the occasion. They seated themselves on the gorgeous cushions which were placed all along the sides of the throne-room, and when all were in their places the Sultan made another sign, and Labakan was brought in. He walked proudly up the room, and, prostrating himself before the throne, said: "What does my lord and father command of me?"

The Sultan rose from his throne, and said: "My son, doubt has been cast on the right of your claim

to this name ; one of those caskets contains the confirmation of your birth. Choose ! I do not doubt but that your choice will fall on the right one."

Labakan rose, and walked towards the caskets. He hesitated for some time as to which he would choose, but at last said : "Honoured father, what higher gift can there be than the happiness of being your son, what nobler than the riches of your favour ? I choose the casket, therefore, on which is written 'Happiness and Riches.'"

"We will examine later on whether you have chosen rightly. Meanwhile seat yourself on that cushion beside the Sheik of Medina," said the Sultan, and again he made a sign to his slave.

Omar was now brought in. His eye was gloomy, his expression sad, and the sight of him awakened a feeling of sympathy in all who saw him. He threw himself down before the throne, and asked what was the Sultan's will. When the Sultan had explained to him that he had to choose one of the caskets he stood up, and walked towards the tables.

He carefully read the inscriptions, and said : "The last few days have taught me how uncertain is happiness, how fleeting are riches ; they have also taught me that the brave man has one indestructible possession—honour—and that the bright star of renown does not fade away with happiness. If I have, therefore, to resign a crown the die is cast, and I choose you 'Honour and Renown.'"

He placed his hand on the casket which he had chosen ; but the Sultan ordered him to wait a moment, and he made a sign to Labakan to come forward, and the latter also laid his hand on his casket.

Then the Sultan had brought to him a bowl of water

from the sacred spring Zemzem, in Mecca, in which he washed his hands preparatory to prayer, and afterwards, turning towards the east, prostrated himself, and prayed: "God of my fathers, Thou who for centuries past hast preserved our race pure and undefiled, suffer not that any unworthy one should bring disgrace on the name of the Abassides, but let Thy protection be over him who is my lawful son in this hour of trial."

The Sultan rose, and once more mounted the throne. All present were motionless with expectation, hardly daring to breathe, and a pin might have been heard to drop, such was the silent suspense of the whole company, those at the back straining their necks to catch sight of the caskets over the heads of those in front. Then the Sultan said: "Open the caskets," and, though the lids had previously resisted all efforts at moving them, they now sprang open of themselves.

In the casket which Omar had chosen lay a small gold crown and sceptre, lying on a velvet cushion; in Labakan's—a large needle and a little thread. The Sultan ordered them both to bring their caskets to him. He took the little crown up in his hand, and marvellous was it to look upon, for, as he held it, it gradually grew bigger and bigger, until it had reached the size of an ordinary crown. The Sultan placed it on Omar's head, as the latter knelt before him, kissed him on the forehead, and told him to sit down at his right hand. Then he turned to Labakan, and said: "There is an old proverb which runs: 'Shoemaker, stick to your last! It seems that you ought to have stuck to your needle. You have not, it is true, deserved mercy from me, but one has petitioned for you to whom to-day I can refuse nothing; therefore I will let you off with

your miserable life, but, if you take my advice, you will make haste to get out of my dominions."

Overcome with shame and humiliation the wretched tailor's apprentice could say nothing, but he flung himself before the prince, while tears came into his eyes.

"Can you forgive me, prince?" he said.

"Loyalty to friends, magnanimity to enemies is the boast of the Abassides," answered the prince as he raised him from the ground. "Go in peace."

"O my own true son!" exclaimed the old Sultan with emotion, and threw himself on to Omar's breast.

The emirs and pashas and all the great people belonging to the realm stood up, and cried: "Hail to the King's new son!" and amidst these universal rejoicings Labakan slunk away out of the room with his casket under his arm.

He went down to the Sultan's stables, bridled his old horse Murva, and rode out of the gates of the town towards Alexandria. His short life as a prince seemed to him like a dream, and only the magnificent casket with its setting of pearls and diamonds was there to remind him that it had been a reality.

When he arrived at length in Alexandria he rode up to his old master's house, fastened his horse up beside the door, and walked into the workroom. The master, who did not immediately recognise him, put on a very important air, and asked how he could serve him; but when he looked more closely, and saw that it was Labakan, he called to his apprentices and pupils, and they all rushed forward, and fell on poor Labakan like an angry mob, poking and hitting him with their tailor's goose and yard-measures, pricking him with needles and pinching him with sharp scissors, unti.

Labakan, who had not expected such a reception as this, fell exhausted on a heap of old clothes.

As he lay there his master read him a severe lecture on his theft of the dress. In vain Labakan kept on assuring him that he had come back on purpose to pay back everything; in vain he offered him three times its value in money as compensation. The master and his men again attacked him, and, after beating him soundly, threw him out of doors. Bruised and torn he mounted his horse, and rode to the inn. There he laid down his weary head, and fell to thinking over the sorrows of life, the ill requital of merit, and the nothingness and vanity of earthly possessions. He fell asleep with the determination to renounce all idea of greatness, and to become a respectable citizen. He did not regret his decision the next day; the heavy hands of his master and his fellow-apprentices seemed to have scourged all the grandeur out of him.

He sold his casket for a large sum of money to a jeweller, bought himself a house, and put up a workshop for his business. When he had got everything into order, and had hung up a notice in front of his window, with the inscription: "Labakan, Tailor," he sat down, and with the needle and thread which he had found in the casket he began to mend the coat which his master had so cruelly torn. He was called away from his work, and as he was going to sit down to it again a strange sight met his eyes. The needle was busily sewing, without a hand of any kind to guide it, making beautifully fine stitches, such as even Labakan in his most artistically-inspired hours had not equalled.

Truly, the smallest gift from a good fairy is useful, and of great value! But there was another virtue still

connected with the gift: the small piece of thread never became exhausted, work as industriously as the needle might.

Labakan had many customers come to him, and he soon became, far and wide, the most renowned tailor. He cut out the clothes, and made the first stitch in them, and then the needle instantly started off working, and went on without stopping until the garment was finished. Ere long Labakan had the custom of the whole town, for not only was his work beautifully done but it was also extraordinarily cheap; and there was only one thing over which the people of Alexandria shook their heads—that he worked entirely without help, and always with closed doors.

And thus the inscription on the casket, promising happiness and riches, was brought to fulfilment. Happiness and riches, if only to a moderate degree, accompanied the steps of the good tailor; and when he heard the name of the young Omar in everyone's mouth, when he heard that this brave youth was the pride and delight of his people and the terror of his enemies, the whilom prince thought within himself: "It is certainly better for me to have remained a tailor, for there is much danger attached to 'Honour and Renown.'"

And so Labakan passed his life, contented with himself, held in respect by his fellow-townsmen; and if the needle has not yet lost its power it still goes on working with the inexhaustible thread of the good fairy Adolzaide.

The merchants unanimously thanked Ali Sizah for his story, and retired to rest.

The caravan started again at sunset, and soon came

to Birket el Stad, or the Pilgrims' Spring, but a few miles from Cairo. The caravan was expected to return about this time, and the merchants had the pleasure of seeing their friends come out from Cairo to meet them. They rode into the town by the gate of Bebel Falch, for it was considered lucky for travellers coming from Mecca to enter by this gate, as it was the one through which the Prophet had passed.

The four Turkish merchants bade good-bye to the stranger and the Greek merchant *Zaleukos* as soon as they reached the market-place, and went off towards home with their friends. *Zaleukos*, however, showed the stranger the way to a good inn, and invited him to take his midday meal with him. The stranger accepted the invitation, and promised to join him as soon as he had changed his dress.

The Greek made arrangements to receive with every mark of hospitality the stranger to whom he had become attached during the journey, and when all he had ordered in the way of food and drink had been placed on the table he sat down to await his guest.

He heard slow and heavy steps coming along the passage which led to his room. He rose with the intention of going forward to meet the stranger and to bid him welcome on the threshold, but as the door opened he recoiled in horror, for advancing towards him was the old terrible red mantle. One look at the figure was enough. There could be no mistake; the same tall, commanding figure, the mask, through which the dark eyes flashed out at him, the red mantle with its gold embroidery. Everything connected with those past hideous hours of his life was but too well known to him.

Conflicting feelings surged within his breast; although his anger had long ago become appeased towards the man whom his memory pictured, and whom he had forgotten, his wounds reopened at the sight of this figure, and in an instant all the anguish of the hours when the agony of death was upon him, and all the trouble that had poisoned the best years of his life, flooded his soul afresh.

"What do you want with me, terrible one?" exclaimed the Greek, as the apparition remained standing motionless on the threshold. "Begone from here, and quickly, lest I curse you!"

"Zaleukos!" said a well-known voice from under the mask. "Zaleukos! is that how you receive your guest?"

The speaker removed his mask, threw back his mantle—it was the stranger, Selim Baruch.

But even this did not seem entirely to calm Zaleukos' fears, and he still shuddered as he looked at the stranger, for he had but too distinctly recognised in him the unknown man of the Ponte Vecchio; the old habit of hospitality, however, rose uppermost, and he silently signed to the stranger to sit down beside him at the table.

As soon as they were seated the stranger spoke. "I can guess your thoughts," he said; "your eyes look your question. I might have held my tongue, and never come within your sight again, but I owe you an account, and, therefore, I ventured to appear before you in my past form, even though I ran the danger of your cursing me. You said once to me: 'The faith of my fathers bids me love him, and he is, besides, more unhappy than I am.' Believe that it is so, and hear my justification.

THE HISTORY OF ORBASAN, THE ROBBER.

"I MUST go back a long way, in order that you may rightly understand what I have to tell you. I was born in Alexandria, of Christian parents. My father, the younger son of an old and well-known French family, was sent by his country as consul to Alexandria. From the time I was ten years old I lived in France, where I was brought up by my maternal uncle, and it was not till some years after the Revolution had broken out that I left my fatherland, in order, together with my uncle, who was no longer safe in the country of his ancestors, to seek refuge beyond the seas with my parents. Full of joyful expectation that here in their house we might again know the ease and peace which had been torn from us by the revolutionaries, we landed. But, alas! I did not find all things in my father's house as they should have been. It is true, the outer storms of those troublous times had not reached so far, but this only made the unhappiness which had penetrated to the very innermost heart of my home the more unexpected. My brother, a young man full of hopes, and my father's chief secretary, had, only a short time before, married the youthful daughter of a Florentine merchant living in our neighbourhood; only two days before our arrival she had suddenly disappeared, and not a trace of her could be found either by our family or her father. At last they could only think that she had gone out walking alone, had ventured too far, and been captured by robbers. If anything, this was a more consoling thought to my poor brother, than the truth, which we learned only too quickly—for the faithless girl had

sailed away with a young Neapolitan, whose acquaintance she had made in her father's house. My brother, enraged beyond measure at her conduct, did everything he could to bring the guilty one to justice, but in vain; his efforts, which had attracted a good deal of attention in Naples and Florence, only served to bring his and our misfortune to a climax. The Florentine nobleman returned to his own country, with the pretence of procuring justice for my brother, but, as facts afterwards proved, for the purpose of ruining him. He suppressed all the inquiries which my brother had set on foot in Florence, and made use of his influence, which he was not particular how he gained, to bring my father and brother under the suspicion of their Government, and finally they were seized in the most shameful manner, transported to France, and there both fell under the axe of the executioner. My poor mother went out of her senses, and only after ten long months of suffering was she released by death—her mind, however, in the last days recovering its full consciousness. And so I was left alone in the world; while one thought alone occupied my soul, one thought alone enabled me to forget my grief—a burning thought which my mother in her last hours had kindled within me. During her last hours, as I have said, she regained her consciousness; she then sent for me, and spoke to me calmly of the fate that had befallen us and of her own end. Then she dismissed everyone from the room, and, raising herself up from her sick-couch, she solemnly addressed me, saying that I should earn her blessing if I would swear to her to carry out a duty that she was going to impose upon me. Impressed by my mother's words I promised on my oath to do whatever she desired. She then broke out into curses

against the Florentine and his daughter, and, with terrible threatenings of drawing her curses down on myself if I failed, she enjoined me to avenge on him the troubles that had befallen our unhappy house. She died in my arms, and the thought of revenge, which had already been slumbering for some time past in my heart, now awoke into full force. I gathered together the remainder of my father's property, and swore to devote it all to carrying out my revenge, or to perish with it.

"I soon made my way to Florence, where I worked with as much secrecy as possible: my plans were the more difficult to be carried out on account of the position which my enemies now held. The old Florentine had been made governor, and so had every means in his hand, on the slightest suspicion, to work my destruction. An unexpected help came to me by chance. One evening I saw a man, in a livery well-known to me, passing along the street; his unsteady gait, his angry looks, and his half-muttered oaths: '*Tanto sacramento,*' '*Maledetto diavolo,*' left me in no doubt as to its being old Pietro, a servant of the Florentine, whom I had known in Alexandria. It was very evident that for some reason he was in a rage with his master, and I determined to turn his present state of mind to good account. He appeared very much surprised to see me there, but confided his grievance to me—that since his master had been made governor he was always finding fault with the servants—and my money, aided by his anger, soon brought Pietro over to my side. The most difficult part of the business had now been accomplished; I had a man in my pay who was ready at any moment to open to me my enemy's door, and my plan of revenge now rapidly developed.

“I did not feel that the ruin of my house would be sufficiently atoned for by the life of the old Florentine ; it required a heavier penalty : he must see the one whom he held dearest lying murdered before his eyes, and the one dearest to him was his daughter Bianca. It was she who by her shameful behaviour to my brother had been the chief cause of the downfall of our family. And just then—welcome intelligence to my heart, which was thirsting for revenge—came the news that Bianca was soon to be married for the second time. That decided it : she must die. But I shrank with horror from the thought of doing such a deed myself, and I had not sufficient reliance on Pietro to trust the work to him, so we looked about to find a man who would accomplish the thing for us. I did not dare to hire a Florentine, for I knew that not one would be found to undertake anything against the Governor. Then an idea suggested itself to Pietro, which I finally carried out, and at the same time he proposed you to me as the most fitting person for the business, you being both a stranger and a physician. The remainder of the tale you already know ; your excessive precaution and honesty alone threatened to wreck the undertaking ; hence the affair of the cloak.

“It was Pietro who opened the little door for us when we reached the Governor’s palace, and he would also have let us out secretly if the terrible scene which we saw through the crack of the door had not filled us with such alarm that we both fled. Spurred on by fear and remorse I ran for some little distance, till I sank down on the steps of a church ; then after a while I was able to collect myself, and my first thought was of you and of the awful fate which awaited you if you were to be found inside the house.

"I crept back to the palace, but could see no sign of either Pietro or you; the little door, however, was open, so I could only hope that you had been able to make use of it for your escape.

"When day broke the fearful apprehension of being discovered and an insurmountable feeling of self-reproach made it impossible for me to stay within the walls of Florence, and I hurried to Rome. But think what my consternation was when, after I had been there a few days, I heard everybody talking of the murder, with the additional information that the murderer, a Greek physician, had been taken up. I returned to Florence in an agony of suspense; if I had already felt that the revenge I had taken was too cruel a one I now cursed the whole thing, for revenge had, indeed, been bought too dearly at the price of your life. I arrived on the very day when you were to lose your hand: I will not attempt to say what I felt as I saw you mount the scaffold and bear your suffering so heroically. Then when I saw your blood gushing forth I made a firm resolve that I would at least do my best to ease and sweeten the remainder of your life. All that has happened since is known to you, and it only remains for me to explain why I have taken this journey with you.

"That which weighed most heavily upon me was the thought that you had not forgiven me, so I made up my mind to pass some days with you, that I might at last find an opportunity of accounting to you for all that has happened between us."

The Greek had listened in silence to his guest's tale; as the latter finished he held out his hand to him with a friendly expression: "I know for a certainty that you must be more unhappy than I am, for that terrible

deed must, like a dark cloud, for ever overshadow your life ; I forgive you from my heart. But now allow me to put one question to you : How is it that you are travelling about the desert in this disguise ? What did you do after you had bought the house for me in Constantinople ? ”

“ I went back to Alexandria,” the other answered. “ Hatred towards all my fellow-creatures was raging within me ; more particularly a burning hatred against those nations which are looked upon as the most cultured. Believe me, I was happier among my Mussulmans. I had been but a few months in Alexandria when my countrymen made their well-known descent upon the land. I only saw in them the executioners of my father and brother, so with a few likeminded young friends I joined myself to those brave Mamelukes, who were the constant terror of the French army. When the campaign came to an end I could not bring myself to return once more to the quiet arts of peace ; with my little band of friends, therefore, I started on a wandering and unsettled life, given up to warfare and the chase. I live happily among these people, who look up to me as their prince, for, if my Asiatics are not as cultured as your Europeans, they are, nevertheless, far removed from the envy and malice, the self-seeking and ambition of the latter.”

Zaleukos thanked the stranger for all that he had told him, but he did not conceal from him that he considered it would be more fitting for a man of his position and culture to live and exercise his powers in Christian and European countries. He grasped his guest's hand, and begged him to return with him, to live and die with him.

The other man looked at him with emotion. "Now I know for a certainty," he said, "that you have forgiven me—nay, that you love me. Receive my heartfelt gratitude for it."

He rose quickly, and stood drawn up to his full height before the Greek, who experienced almost a sensation of fear as he looked on the martial demeanour, on the dark, flashing eyes, and heard the deep, mysterious voice of his guest.

"Your offer is a handsome one," continued the latter, "and for any other man would be irresistibly attractive, but I—I cannot accept it. My horse stands already saddled, my servants even now await me; farewell, Zaleukos!"

The friends, whom fate had so curiously brought together, now gave each other a parting embrace.

"And what am I to call you? What is the name of my guest, who will live for ever in my memory?" asked the Greek.

The stranger looked long at him, then, once more pressing his hand, said: "I am known as the Lord of the Desert—I am the robber Orbasan."

THE SHEIK OF ALEXANDRIA AND HIS SLAVES.

ALI BANU, the Sheik of Alexandria, was a remarkable man. When he passed along the streets of the town in the morning, clad in his robes of ceremony, with a turban made of the costliest cashmere and a magnificent girdle worth the price of fifty camels; walking slowly, with a meditative air, his forehead drawn into frowning lines, his eyebrows contracted, his eyes cast down, and at every fifth step thoughtfully stroking his beard—when, I repeat, he thus passed along on his way to the mosque, there, as became his position, to read the Koran aloud to the faithful, everybody stood to look after him, saying one to the other: “What a fine, handsome man he is.”

“And rich, too,” someone would add; “very rich. Has he not a palace overlooking the harbour at Stamboul? Has he not estates and fields, and many thousand head of cattle, and numerous slaves?”

“Yes,” a third speaker would rejoin; “and the Tartar who came from Stamboul lately, sent here by his Highness himself, whom may the Prophet bless, told me that our Sheik was held in great honour by the Chief Secretary of State and by other high officials; indeed, by the Sultan also.”

“Even so,” exclaimed a fourth. “May his steps be blessed. He is a rich and eminent man, and yet—yet—you know what I mean!”

"Yes, yes," murmured the others among themselves. "He too has his burden to carry. We would not care to change with him. A rich and eminent man, and yet—yet——"

Ali Banu had a magnificent house, situated in the most beautiful quarter of Alexandria. In front of the house ran a wide marble terrace shaded with palm-trees, and he often sat here in the evening, smoking his hookah. At a respectful distance stood twelve richly-clad slaves, awaiting the slightest sign of command. One carried his betel-nut, another held his sunshade, a third had vessels of beaten gold filled with delicious sherbet, a fourth a fan of peacocks' feathers, to keep away the flies from his master; while others were singers, standing ready with their lutes and wind instruments to delight him with their music should he so desire; while the most learned among them was furnished with several scrolls, from which to read if the Sheik should wish it.

But they waited in vain for his commands. He wished for neither music nor song, he had no desire to hear wise sayings or poems of the poets of old read aloud to him, he asked for neither sherbet to drink nor betel to chew, and even the slave with the feather fan plied his task in vain, for his master took no notice even when a fly came buzzing round him.

Passers-by often paused, gazing with admiring astonishment at the splendour of the house, at the richly-dressed slaves, and at the luxurious comfort of all the arrangements; but when they turned their eyes upon the Sheik, and saw how he sat under his palm-trees, looking so silent and gloomy, his eyes never moving from their contemplation of the blue clouds of smoke that rose from his hookah, they would shake

their heads, and say : " Truly, the rich man is a poor man. He who has much is poorer than he who has nothing, for the Prophet has not given him the sense to enjoy it." So the people talked, laughing at him, and passed on.

One evening, as the Sheik, as usual, was sitting under the palms in front of his house, surrounded by every kind of earthly pomp, smoking his hookah in lonely sadness, a party of young people, standing not far off, began looking and laughing at him.

" What a fool," said one of them, " the Sheik Ali Banu is ! If I had all his wealth I would spend it very differently. I would live sumptuously every day, and enjoy myself. My friends should come and feast with me in the large rooms of the house, and its halls should resound with mirth and laughter."

" Yes," responded another, " that would not be so bad ; but, then, many friends eat up a fortune, even were it as large as the Sultan's, whom the Prophet bless. But if I sat here in the evening under the palms in this beautiful place I would make those slaves there sing and play to me, and my dancers should come and perform all their most wonderful feats for my amusement ; and while this was going on I should sit and smoke in grand style, and have the best of sherbet brought me, and enjoy myself like a King of Bagdad."

" The Sheik," interposed another of the young people, who was a scribe—" the Sheik, I am told, is a learned man, and full of wisdom—and, indeed, his lectures on the Koran give proof of his being deeply read in all the poets and the writings of the sages—but is his manner of life such as beseems a man of understanding ? There stands a slave with an armful of scrolls, for leave to read one of which I would give my best robe, for

doubtless, they are rare writings. But he!—he sits and smokes, and lets the books—just be. If I were the Sheik Ali Banu the fellow should read to me till he had no breath left in his body, or till the night had come; and even then I would make him go on reading until I had fallen asleep.”

“Ha, ha!” laughed a fourth. “You have fine ideas of how to make life enjoyable. Eating and drinking, singing and dancing, reading aloud of wise sayings and poems. No, no; I should go to work very differently. He has immense numbers of the most superb camels and horses, as well as heaps of money, and, if in his place, I would travel, travel to the world’s end, even to the land of the Muscovites, to the land of the French—no way would be too far—so that I might see the splendours of the world. That is what I should do were I the man who sits there.”

“Youth is a beautiful time, and the age when one is gay and light-hearted,” put in an old man of insignificant appearance, who was standing near them, and had been listening to their talk. “But allow me to say that youth is also foolish, and talks recklessly sometimes without understanding what it says.”

“What do you mean by that, old man?” asked the young men, somewhat taken aback. “Are you referring to us? What business is it of yours if we choose to find fault with the way the Sheik spends his life?”

“If there is one who knows better than another it is right for him to point out the other’s error, for such is the will of the Prophet,” replied the old man. “The Sheik, it is true, is blessed with large possessions, and has everything that the heart can wish for, nevertheless, he has cause to be sad and grave. Do you

imagine that he was always like that? I can tell you that I saw him only fifteen years ago, when he was as cheerful and active as a gazelle, and enjoyed the gaieties of life. At that time he had a son, the joy of his heart, handsome and accomplished, and everyone who saw or spoke with him envied the Sheik this one great treasure, for he was then but ten years old, but more advanced in learning than others at eighteen."

"And he died? Ah, poor Sheik!" exclaimed the young scribe.

"It would have been a comfort to him to know that his son had gone to his home among the habitations of the Prophet, where life would have been better for him than here in Alexandria; that, which he was called upon to suffer, was far worse. It was the time when the French, like hungry wolves, came over to this country, and made war against us. They had conquered Alexandria, and from there they penetrated farther and farther, and fought with the Mamelukes. The Sheik was a clever man, and knew how to manage them; but, whether they were greedy of his riches, or whether it was because he interested himself in his fellow-believers, I cannot exactly say. The long and the short of it, however, was that one day they entered his house, and accused him of secretly supplying the Mamelukes with weapons, horses, and victuals! But, assert his innocence as he might, it was no use, for the French are a rough, hard-hearted race when it comes to extorting money, and they carried off his young son Kairam to their camp as hostage. He offered large sums of money for him, but they would not let him go, hoping to provoke him to offer more. Then, all of a sudden, they had orders from their Pasha, or whatever he called himself, to set sail without delay.

No one in Alexandria knew anything about it, when—there they were all at once away on the high seas, carrying, it was supposed, little Kairam, Ali Banu's son, with them, for he has never been heard of since."

"Ah, poor man, poor man! Allah has indeed afflicted him," cried the young men with one accord as they looked compassionately towards the Sheik, sitting amidst the surrounding splendour, mourning and solitary, beneath the palms.

"His wife, whom he fondly loved, died of grief for the loss of her son. He, however, bought a ship, and fitted it out, and persuaded the French physician, who lives out there by the fountain, to go with him to France in search of his son. They embarked, and were for a long while at sea, until at length they came to the land of those Giaours, those unbelievers, who had been in Alexandria. But, according to all accounts, terrible things had been taking place there. They had killed their Sultan and the Pashas, the rich people and the poor were cutting off each other's heads, and the whole country was in disorder. It was in vain that they went into every town in their search for little Kairam—no one seemed to know anything about him—and the French doctor at last advised the Sheik to return home, as otherwise they themselves would probably lose their heads. And so they came back, and since his return the Sheik has lived as you see him to-day, for he mourns, and with reason, over his son. Whenever he eat and drinks must not the thought arise within him: 'Perhaps my poor Kairam is hungering and thirsting'? Whenever he puts on his rich shawls and state robes, as he is bound to do by his office and position, must he not think to himself: 'Perhaps at this moment he has nothing wherewith

to cover his nakedness' ? And when he is surrounded by his singers and dancers and readers, and his many slaves, does he not ask himself whether his poor son may not be forced to act and play as it suits the pleasure of his French master ? But his greatest grief is the fear that little Kairam, so far away from the land of his fathers, and living among unbelievers who make a mock at it, will become an apostate to the faith of his people, so that his father will not be able to embrace him some day in the garden of Paradise !

"And this is why he is so lenient to his slaves and gives such large sums to the poor, for he thinks that Allah will requite him and soften the heart of the French master, so that the latter will deal gently with his son. Besides this, on the morning of every anniversary of the day on which his son was taken from him, he sets twelve of his slaves free."

"I have heard about that before," said the scribe. "All sorts of strange tales are afloat—nothing, however, as regards his son ; all that is said is that he is a strange man, and extraordinarily interested in tales, and that every year the slaves compete with one another, and those who tell the best stories are given their freedom."

"Do not believe all that you hear people say," responded the old man ; "it is as I tell you, and I know all about it ; it is quite possible that he tries to cheer himself up as the days pass heavily by, and that he has someone to tell him tales, but it is for his son's sake that he sets the slaves free. But the evening is growing cool, and I must be going on. *Schalem aleikum*. Peace be with you, young men, and in future think more kindly of the Sheik."

The young men thanked him for all he had told them, gave one more look at the sorrowing father, and went

off down the street, saying to one another as they walked along: "I should not like to be Sheik Ali Banu."

It was not long after this conversation had taken place between the young men and their aged informant, that the former happened at the hour of morning prayer to be passing along the same street. It brought back to them the tale they had heard, and they began to speak pityingly of the Sheik as they looked towards his house. But what was their surprise to see everything decked out in the most gorgeous manner! From the roof, where gaily-dressed female slaves could be seen walking about, floated flags and streamers; the entrance halls were spread with rich carpets; and silk was laid down from these, covering the two steps of the ascent; while even in the street there had been spread some fine and beautiful cloth, which many would have liked for a holiday robe or for a foot-covering.

"Well, to be sure, the Sheik has greatly altered his mind in these few days!" said the young scribe. "Is he going to hold a feast? Is he going to exercise his dancers and singers? And just look at those carpets! Is there anything like them elsewhere in Alexandria? And this cloth laid along the public foot-path; it really is a shame!"

"Do you know what I think?" said another. "He is, I am sure, going to entertain some guest of high rank, for preparations like these are such as one makes when a governor of some large states or an effendi of the Sultan is going to honour a house with his visit. I wonder who may be coming here to-day?"

"Look there, is not that our old friend of the other

evening? He will certainly know everything and be able to enlighten us. Ho there! Reverend sir, will you not join us for a while?" they called out. The old man, seeing their gesticulations, came towards them, for he recognised the party with whom he had conversed a few evenings before. They drew his attention to the preparations that had been made at the Sheik's house, and asked him if he knew who the distinguished guest was whom the master was expecting.

"You think, no doubt," he answered, "that Ali Banu is holding some great festival to-day, or expecting to be honoured by some mighty lord? It is nothing of the kind; but to-day is the twelfth day of Ramadan, as you know, and it was on this day that his son was taken from him."

"By the beard of the Prophet!" exclaimed one of the young men, "everything looks like a wedding or rejoicing of some kind, and yet it must be his chief day of mourning. How do you reconcile the two things? Tell us now, is not the Sheik somewhat deranged in his mind?"

"Are you still so hasty in your judgments, my young friend?" asked the old man, smiling. "This time your arrow was well pointed and your bow well strung, and yet you shot wide of the mark. Know that the Sheik is expecting his son back to-day."

"He is found, then?" cried all the youths at once, rejoicing at the thought.

"No; it may be long yet ere he is found, but I will explain. Eight or ten years ago, when the Sheik was commemorating this day with his usual mourning and lamentation, setting his slaves free, and giving food and drink to the poor, it happened that a Dervish was lying worn out and exhausted in the shadow of

the house, to whom the Sheik also offered refreshment. Now, the Dervish was a holy man, and skilled in prophesyings and astrology, and when his strength had been somewhat revived by the hospitality of Ali Banu he went up to the latter, and said : ' I know the cause of your sorrow ; is not to-day the twelfth day of Ramadan and was it not on this day that you lost your son ? But be comforted, for on this day your sorrow shall be turned into joy, for know that in some future year on this same day your son will return to you.' It was thus the Dervish spoke to him, and it would be a sin for any Mussulman to doubt the word of a man like that. Ali's grief was not, indeed, lessened by this, but ever since he has looked for the return of his son on this day, waiting in expectation till the fall of night ; so you may well understand why he decorates his house, his porches and steps, for at any hour his son may arrive."

" It is a wonderful tale," exclaimed the scribe, " and I should much like to see how splendidly everything is prepared ; how he himself still sits and mourns amid all this magnificence ; and, above all, I should like to hear the slaves tell the tales that he likes to have related to him."

" There is nothing easier," said the old man ; " the overseer of the slaves is a friend of mine of many years' standing, and always gets a place for me on this day in the large state-room, where an odd person or so is not noticed among the throng of servants and friends of the Sheik. I will speak to him, and get him to let you in ; there are only four of you, so that it will be quite possible. Come about the ninth hour to this same place, and I will give you his answer."

Thanking the old man, the young men went their

way full of curiosity to see how everything would be arranged.

They returned at the appointed hour, and found the old man awaiting them in front of the house. He told them that he had permission from the overseer to let them in. He led the way, however, not by the richly-decorated steps and halls, but through a side door, which he carefully closed again behind him. Then he took them through several passages until they reached the large reception-room. They found the whole place thronged with richly-dressed men, persons of position in the town and friends of the Sheik, who had come to console him in his trouble. There also were slaves of every kind and nation; but they all wore an expression of sorrow, for they loved their master, and grieved with him. At the farther end of the room, seated on a handsome divan, were the more distinguished of Ali's friends, who were being waited upon by slaves, and near them, on the ground, sat the Sheik, for his mourning did not allow him to sit on the carpet of joy. His head was resting on his hands, and he seemed to take but little heed of the consolatory words which his friends whispered to him. Opposite to him sat some old and young men in slaves' attire. The old man informed his young friends that these were the slaves who would to-day receive their freedom from Ali Banu's hand. Among them were some Frenchmen, and the old man drew their attention particularly to one of these, who was exceptionally handsome and still quite young. The Sheik had only bought him a few days before of a slave-dealer from Tunis for a large sum of money, but was, nevertheless, going to set him free, as he thought that the greater the number of Frenchmen whom he sent back to their

own country the sooner would the Prophet release his son.

After refreshments had been handed round to everyone the Sheik gave the overseer of the slaves a sign. The latter stood up, and a deep silence fell on all in the room. He stepped in front of the slaves who were to be made free, and said in a loud, clear voice : " You men who are this day to receive your freedom by the grace of my master, Ali Banu, the Sheik of Alexandria, you are now to do what is customary in this house on this day, and begin to relate stories." They whispered together, and then an old slave began to speak, and told the tale of

NOSE, THE DWARF.

SIR! They are very much mistaken who think that fairies and magicians existed only in the days of Haroun-Al-Raschid, the Lord of Bagdad, and who declare that the tales about the doings of the genii and of those who rule over them, which one hears recited in the market-places of the towns, are false. There are fairies on the earth to this day, and it is not so long since I was myself witness of an occurrence, in which the genii were unmistakably concerned, as I now will relate to you.

In a well-known town of my fatherland, Germany, there dwelt many years ago a cobbler and his wife, who together led an honest and simple life. He sat by day at the corner of the street mending shoes and slippers, or, when anyone would entrust him with such a job, making new ones, but then he was obliged to go first of all and buy shoe-leather, for he was poor, and could keep no store by him. His wife sold fruits and vegetables,

which she grew in a small garden outside the town, and many people were pleased to buy of this cleanly and quietly-dressed woman, who knew how to display her merchandise to the best advantage.

This couple had one beautiful child, a boy of pleasing countenance, well made, and well grown for his twelve years of age. He generally sat with his mother in the vegetable market, and when the housewives and cooks had bought a good deal from the cobbler's wife, he would help them carry home some of their fruit and vegetables, and he seldom returned from an errand of this kind without a pretty flower or a piece of money or a cake, for the mistresses were pleased to see their cooks bring the pretty little boy back with them, and always behaved generously to him.

One day the cobbler's wife was sitting as usual in the market-place, and she had in front of her several baskets filled with cabbages and other vegetables and all kinds of herbs and seeds, while in some small baskets were early pears, apples, and apricots. Little Jacob, her son, sat beside her, and called out the wares in a high, distinct voice :

"This way, gentlemen ; see what beautiful cabbages, what sweet-smelling herbs ! Early pears, ladies ; early apples and apricots ! Who will buy ? My mother sells them cheap !"

So the little boy kept calling out, and presently an old woman came over the market-place towards the cobbler's wife. She looked somewhat ragged and tattered ; her face was thin and sharp, and deeply furrowed with age, while her eyes were red and her nose pointed and hooked, nearly reaching to her chin ; she walked with a long stick, although it would be difficult to say exactly how she walked ; for she limped, and shuffled, and

tottered, as if she had castors on her legs, and might tumble over at any moment, with her sharp nose to the ground.

The cobbler's wife looked at this old woman with curiosity and interest, for it was now a good sixteen years since she had sat daily in the market-place, and never before had she seen this singular figure. Nevertheless, she shrank involuntarily as the old woman came hobbling up to her, and paused beside the baskets.

"Are you Hanne, the seller of vegetables?" asked the latter in an unpleasant, croaking voice, while her head went wobbling from side to side.

"Yes; I am she," answered the cobbler's wife. "Can I serve you with anything?"

"We will see, we will see! Let me look at the herbs; it may be that you have what I want," answered the old woman; and she bent down over the baskets, and thrust her ugly dark-brown hands into them, clutching with her long, spider-like fingers at the herbs that were laid out so daintily, and, one after the other, lifting them to her nose to smell. The cobbler's wife felt her heart ready to burst, as she watched the old woman handling her precious herbs; but she dared not say anything, for the purchasers had a right to examine the wares; and, more than this, the old woman inspired her with an unaccountable feeling of terror. When the latter had thoroughly turned over all that was in the baskets, she muttered: "Wretched stuff! wretched herbs! not a single thing that I want; they sold better things fifty years ago; wretched stuff!"

Such words as these excited the indignation of little Jacob. "You are a shameless old woman, that you are!" he cried angrily. "First you thrust your dirty brown fingers in among the beautiful herbs, and crush

them together ; then you hold them up to your long nose, so that no one who has seen you do it will buy them ; and now you find fault with them, and call them wretched stuff ; but I can tell you that the Duke's own cook buys everything from us ! ”

The old woman looked askint at him, laughed in a disagreeable manner, and said in her hoarse voice : “ Little son, little son ! so my nose pleases you, does it—my beautiful, long nose ? You shall have one too, in the middle of your face, and reaching down to your chin.” While she so spoke, she limped up to the other baskets in which the cabbages were arranged. Taking up the finest and whitest heads in her hand she squeezed them together until they groaned, and then threw them back anyhow into the basket, saying, as before : “ Wretched stuff, wretched cabbages ! ”

“ Don't let your head go on wobbling in that ugly way,” cried the boy in fear. “ Your neck is as thin as a cabbage stalk, and might easily break, and then your head might fall into the basket, and who would buy then ? ”

“ Does my thin neck not please you ? ” murmured the old creature, laughing. “ You shall have none at all ; the head shall rest on the shoulders, so as not to fall off from the tiny body.”

“ Leave off talking such nonsense to the child,” at last interposed the cobbler's wife, put out of temper by the prolonged handling, examining, and smelling of her goods. “ If you want to buy anything make haste about it. You are frightening away the other customers.”

“ Well and good ; it shall be as you say,” cried the old woman, looking grimly at her. “ I will take these six cabbages ; but, as you see, I have to walk with my

stick and cannot carry anything ; will you allow your little son to take them home for me ? I will pay him for it."

The little boy did not want to go, and began to cry, for he was afraid of the ugly old woman, but his mother gravely ordered him to go, for she considered it a sin to let the weakly old woman carry her burden alone. Half weepingly he did what his mother commanded, bundled the cabbages together in a basket, and followed the old woman across the market-place.

She did not get along very quickly, and it was three quarters of an hour before she came to a distant part of the town, and at last paused in front of a small, tumbledown house. She drew a rusty old hook out of her pocket, thrust it adroitly into a small hole in the door, which immediately flew open with a crash. But what was little Jacob's astonishment when he stepped inside ! The interior of the house was magnificently decorated ; the walls and ceilings were of marble ; the furniture, of the finest ebony, was inlaid with gold and polished stones ; but the floor was of glass, and so slippery that the child slid about, and fell several times. The old woman, however, drew from her pocket a little silver whistle, upon which she blew a tune that rang shrilly through the house. Whereupon several guinea-pigs came down the stairs ; but what seemed very peculiar to little Jacob was that they walked upright on two legs, and wore nut-shells instead of shoes on their paws, and had on ordinary clothes, even to hats of the newest fashion on their heads. " Where are my slippers, you scoundrels, you ? " cried the old woman, hitting at them with her stick, so that they hopped about and squeaked. " How long am I to stand waiting like this ? "

They quickly sprang upstairs again, and returned with a pair of cocoa-nut shells, lined with leather, which they skilfully slipped on to the old woman's feet.

And now there was no more limping and shuffling, for she threw away her staff and went gliding over the glass floor with the greatest rapidity, leading little Jacob along by the hand. At last she came to a room where she stopped; it was furnished with every kind of vessel and utensil, almost as if it were a kitchen, although the mahogany tables and handsomely-covered sofas were more suitable to a state-room.

"Sit down," said the old woman in quite a friendly tone, pushing him into the corner of the sofa, and drawing a table up in front of him, so that he could not get out. "Sit down. You had a good weight to carry; men's heads are not so light, not so light."

"But why do you talk so strangely?" cried the child. "Tired I am, it is true; but they were cabbage heads which you bought from my mother and I was carrying."

"Ah, there you are mistaken," laughed the old woman, and she lifted the cover of the basket, and brought out a human head, lifting it up by the hair. The child was beside himself with terror; he could not understand how this could have happened, but he thought of his mother, for if anyone were to hear about these human heads, she would certainly be taken up for it.

"I must now give you something, in return for your politeness," muttered the old woman. "Just have patience for a while, and I will prepare you a little soup that you will remember all your life," and, so saying, she whistled again. First there appeared in answer a number of guinea-pigs in human clothing; they wore

kitchen aprons, and had ladles and carving-knives stuck in their waist-belts. After these came hopping in a troupe of squirrels, in wide Turkish trousers ; they walked on their hind legs, and had little green velvet caps on their heads. These seemed to be the scullions, for they climbed up the walls with the greatest celerity, and brought down pans and dishes, eggs and butter, herbs and flour, and carried everything to the stove, where the old woman was busy going to and fro in her cocoa-nut shoes, and it was evident to the boy that she was intent on cooking something nice for him. And now the fire shot up, and the soup began to smoke and bubble. A pleasant odour filled the room, and the old woman became busier than ever, the guinea-pigs and squirrels running about after her, and every time she passed in front of the fire she bent over the pot with her long nose, and looked in. At last there was a hissing and sputtering, steam rose in clouds from the pot, and the soup boiled over. Then the old woman lifted it off, poured some of it into a silver bowl, and set it before little Jacob.

"There, little son, there," she said ; "now eat your little basin of soup, and you will have everything that you admired so in me. You shall also become a clever cook, so that you may be of use for something, but that herb, that particular herb—no, you will never find it. Why did not your mother have it in her basket ?" The boy did not rightly understand what she was saying, and so gave all the more attention to his soup, which he thought delicious. His mother had often prepared nice food for him, but never anything equal to this. An odour of herbs and spices rose from it, it seemed strong and nourishing, and the flavour was a mingling of sweet and sour. As Jacob was swallowing the last

drop of this enjoyable soup the guinea-pigs set light to some Arabian incense, which sent blue clouds floating about the room. Thicker and thicker became the clouds, enveloping the child, who began to feel stupefied by the smell of the incense, and though he kept on telling himself each time he woke up that he must go back to his mother he instantly began dozing again, and at last fell into a sound sleep on the old woman's sofa.

Strange dreams came over him. It seemed to him that the old woman took off his clothes and wrapped him up in a squirrel skin, and that he was then able to jump and climb like a squirrel, and that he ran about with the other squirrels and the guinea-pigs, who were very polite and well-mannered people, waiting upon the old lady. At first he was only put to cleaning shoes—that is, the cocoa-nuts, which the old woman wore instead of slippers—and had to rub oil on them, and then polish them till they shone again. As he had often done similar jobs in his own home he was quick of hand at this, and at the year's end, so he went on dreaming, he was employed for more-delicate duties—namely, to help some of the other squirrels catch the motes in the sunbeams, and, when they had enough, to pass them through the finest hair sieve. The old woman considered that these motes were the most delicate things she could get, and, being unable to bite well, having lost her teeth, had her bread made of them.

At the end of the second year he was again transferred, and had now to assist in collecting drinking-water for the mistress. It is not to be imagined that she had a cistern sunk in the ground, or a tub placed in the yard in which to catch the rain water; the process was a far more delicate one, for the squirrels,

and among them Jacob, had to collect the dew from the roses in hazel-nut shells, this being what the old lady drank, and as she was a remarkably large drinker the water carriers had a heavy task. Another year went by, and he was now set to do some of the inside work of the house—that is, to keep the floors clean, and as these were of glass, and showed every breath, it was no light work. They had to sweep them, and then tie old cloths round their feet, and move about the room in these as cleverly as they could. At last, in the fourth year, he was advanced to work in the kitchen. This was an honourable post, to which only those were elected who had gone through a long training. Here Jacob worked his way upwards, from a scullion to chief pastry-maker, and attained to such unusual skilfulness and experience in everything that had to do with cooking that he was often astonished at himself: the most elaborate dishes, pastries flavoured with two hundred kinds of essences, soups made of every herb upon earth—all these he learned to prepare, and understood how to make quickly and perfectly.

He had now been about seven years in the old woman's service, when one day, as she took off her cocoa-nut slippers and prepared to start out with her basket and stick, she ordered him to pluck a chicken, stuff it with herbs, and roast it nicely yellow and brown by the time she came back. This he immediately set about, according to the rules of his art. He wrung the chicken's neck, dipped it in scalding water, deftly plucked out the feathers, scraped the skin that it might be smooth and delicate, and cleaned it; then he went to select the herbs for the seasoning, but when he came to the herb-room he saw a cupboard in the wall which he had never noticed before. The door was half open, and his

curiosity led him to peep inside and see what was there, and lo ! there stood several small packets, from which proceeded a strong and pleasant odour. He opened one of the baskets, and found therein herbs of peculiar shape and colour ; the stem and leaves were a bluish green, and bore a small flower of flaming red edged with yellow. He gazed thoughtfully at the flowers, smelt them, and recognised the same strong smell that the soup which the old woman had once cooked for him had given forth. But so pungent was the smell that he began to sneeze, and more and more violently did he continue to sneeze, until at last, still sneezing, he awoke.

There he was, lying on the old woman's sofa. He looked wonderingly around him. " Well," he said to himself, " it is surprising what vivid dreams one can have ! I could have sworn that I was a wretched little squirrel, a friend of guinea-pigs and other vermin, and also that I had become a capital cook. How my mother will laugh when I tell her all about it ! But she will scold me too, perhaps, for falling asleep in a strange house instead of going back to help her in the market." So thinking, he roused himself, so as to be going off. His limbs still felt somewhat stiff from sleeping, particularly his neck, for he could not move his head about comfortably ; and he could not help laughing at himself for being still so drunk with sleep, for at every moment, before he knew what he was about, he was knocking his nose against a cupboard or a wall, or, if he happened to turn quickly, against some door-post. The squirrels and guinea-pigs ran whimpering round him, as if they wished to go with him, and he invited them to do so as he stood on the threshold, for they were nice little animals, but they scuttled back

into the house on their nut-shells, and he only heard them wailing in the distance.

It was in a somewhat remote part of the town that the old lady lived, and he could scarcely find his way out of the narrow alleys; what was more, these seemed everywhere to be crowded with people, and he supposed that there must be a dwarf on view in the neighbourhood, for everybody was calling out: "Oh, look at the ugly dwarf! Where does he come from? Just see what a long nose he has, and his head is sunk right into his shoulders, and what hideous brown hands!" At any other time he would have joined with the crowd, for there was nothing he liked better to see than a giant or a dwarf, or anyone in strange costume, but he knew that he ought to make haste back to his mother.

He felt very anxious when he reached the market-place; but his mother was still sitting there, and had a good deal of fruit in her basket, so he thought that he could not have slept long, but, even when some little way off, he fancied she looked sad. She did not call to the passers to come to buy, but sat leaning her head on her hand. As he drew nearer it seemed to him that she was paler than usual. He hesitated as to what he had better do, but at last plucked up courage, and, slipping in behind her, laid his hand confidently in her arm, and said: "What is the matter, little mother? Are you angry with me?"

The woman turned towards him, and then drew back with a cry of horror.

"What do you want with me, you ugly dwarf?" she cried. "Be off with you, be off; I cannot bear such mock play!"

"Oh, mother, what can you mean?" asked Jacob

in alarm. "You cannot be well, or you would not drive your son away."

"I have already told you to go away!" replied the woman angrily. "You will get no money from me with your fooling, you ugly monster!"

"Truly, God has taken from her the light of reason!" said the child to himself, greatly troubled. "What can I do to get her home? Dearest mother, only be reasonable; look well at me; I am thy son, thy Jacob."

"The joke has become too impudent," cried Hanne to her neighbours. "Just look at that ugly dwarf. There he stands, driving away my other customers, and daring to mock at my unhappiness, saying to me: 'I am indeed thy son, thy Jacob.' The shameless creature!"

Then the neighbours arose, and began abusing him as violently as they could—and market-women, as you know, understand how to do this sort of thing—and upbraiding him for making sport of poor Hanne, who had had her beautiful boy stolen from her seven years before, and they threatened to fall upon him in a body and tear him to pieces if he did not at once go away.

Poor Jacob did not know what to make of all this. Had he not really, as he believed, gone early that very same day with his mother to the market and helped her to set out the fruit and vegetables, and later on accompanied the old woman home, eaten some soup, had a little nap, and come back here again? Yet here were his mother and the neighbours talking of seven years! And they called him a horrid dwarf! What had happened to him, then? When he saw that his mother did not want to have anything more to do with him the tears came into his eyes, and he went sorrowfully down the street to where his father sat daily at his stall, mend-

ing shoes. "I will see," he said to himself, "whether my father also does not recognise me ; I will go and stand by the door and speak to him." When he reached the cobbler's stall he placed himself at the door, and looked in. The cobbler was so busy at his work that he did not see him at first, but when he did look up by chance, and glanced towards the door, he let shoes, thread, awl, everything fall to the ground as he cried out, in a tone of horror : "In God's name, what is that—what is that ?"

"Good evening, master," said Jacob, walking right into the shop ; "how do you do ?"

"Badly, badly, my little sir !" answered the father to Jacob's great astonishment, for he appeared also not to know him. "I do not get on as well as I used to. I am lonely, and am growing old, and yet I cannot afford an apprentice."

"But have you no young son who might by degrees learn how to help you ?" asked Jacob.

"I had one once ; his name was Jacob, and he must now be a tall, able fellow of twenty years of age, who would be of great assistance to me. Oh, this would be a pleasant life if I had him ! Even when he was only twelve years old he was so skilful and handy, and already understood so much of the work, and pretty and pleasant into the bargain, that he would have attracted a lot of custom, and I should soon have been able to give up the cobbling, and only taken in new work ! But such is the way of the world !"

"And where is your son, then ?" asked Jacob, with trembling voice.

"God alone knows," he answered. "Seven years ago—yes, it is as long ago as that—he was stolen away from us at the market."

“Seven years ago!” exclaimed Jacob in horror.

“Yes, little sir; seven years ago. I can still see my poor wife as she came home, sobbing and crying, for the child had never returned the whole day through, and she had been searching and inquiring all over the town, and could not find him. I had always thought and said that this would happen; for Jacob was a pretty child—no one could deny that—and my wife was proud of him, and was pleased when people admired him, and used often to send him with the vegetables and other things into the grand houses. That was right enough, for he always got generously treated, but, as I used to say: ‘Take care! the town is a large one, and there are bad people living in it. Take care of my Jacob!’ And it came about as I said. One day an ugly old woman came into the market-place, and haggled over the fruits and vegetables, and at last bought so many that she could not carry them herself. My wife, kindly soul, let the boy go with her, and from that hour to this she has never set eyes on him again.”

“And that is now seven years ago, you say?”

“Seven years this spring. We had him cried, we went from house to house making inquiries; many who knew the pretty boy, and were fond of him, went about also to look for him, but in vain. No one seemed to know anything about the woman who had brought the vegetables; but a very old woman, who was a good ninety years of age, said that she was probably the wicked fairy Herb-wise, who every fifty years came into the town, and bought all kinds of herbs.”

Such was the tale his father told him as he went on vigorously hammering his shoes, and drawing the thread well out with both his hands. But it became more and more evident to Jacob that he had not only dreamed

but had actually served the wicked fairy for seven years in the shape of a squirrel. His heart was so full of anger and sorrow that he felt as if it would burst. Seven years of his life had the old woman stolen from him, and what had he got in compensation? What had he got for polishing cocoa-nut slippers, for cleaning a room with a glass floor, for hearing all the secrets of cooking? He stood a while contemplating his hard fate, until his father asked him: "Is there any work I can do for you, young sir? A pair of new slippers, or," he added, smiling, "a case, perhaps, for your nose?"

"What is there the matter with my nose?" asked Jacob. "Why should I want a case for it?"

"Well," replied the cobbler, "everyone to his taste; but, I must confess, if I had such a frightful nose, I would have a case of pink-coloured leather made for it. Look here, I have a beautiful piece by me; it will certainly take a yard to cover it. However careful you may be, little sir, I am certain that you knock against every doorpost and every cart that you try to avoid."

Jacob stood dumb with terror; he felt his nose; it was thick, and a good two hands long! So the old woman had also transformed him in shape, and that was why his mother did not know him and why they called him an ugly dwarf! "Master," he said, half crying, to the cobbler, "have you a mirror here, that I may look at myself?"

"Young sir," answered the father gravely, "you have not received a form which can exactly cause you to feel vain, and you have no occasion to be looking perpetually at yourself in the glass. Get out of the habit of doing so, for it is, in your case, a laughable habit."

"Oh, pray, let me look in the glass," cried Jacob. "I assure you it is not from vanity I ask."

"Leave me in peace. I have no glass here; my wife has a small one, but I do not know where she keeps it. If you must look at yourself in one there is Urban, the barber, over the way, who has a glass twice as big as your head; go and look in that, and, meanwhile, good-morning!"

And with these words his father thrust him gently outside, shut the door after him, and went back to his work. Jacob, feeling very down-hearted, crossed over to Urban, the barber, whom he had known for many years.

"Good-morning, Urban," he said to the latter. "I am come to ask a favour; will you be so kind as to let me look for a moment in your glass?"

"With pleasure; there it is," cried the barber, laughing, and all his customers laughed heartily in concert. "You are an attractive young fellow, tall and slim, with a neck like a swan, hands like a queen, and a short nose, as pretty as can be seen. A bit vain with it all, it is true; but go on looking at yourself, no one shall say of me that I was too envious to let you make use of my glass."

A shout of boisterous laughter rang through the shaving-room at the barber's words; meanwhile Jacob had walked up to the glass, and stood looking at himself. Tears came into his eyes. "No wonder, indeed, dear mother, that you did not know your little Jacob," he said to himself. "It was not so that he looked in the happy days when you were so proud of him and liked to show him off before everybody!"

His eyes had grown as small as those of a pig, his nose monstrous, hanging over mouth and chin, his neck seemed to have entirely disappeared, for his head was sunk into his shoulders, and it was only with the greatest

difficulty that he could turn it to right or left ; his body was no bigger than it had been seven years before, when he was twelve years old, for whereas others grow in height between the years of twelve and twenty he had only grown in breadth, and his chest and back bulged out in such a way that he had the appearance of a small, overloaded sack ; the heavy body, moreover, was supported on short, weak, little legs, which hardly looked capable of carrying it ; while the arms had grown proportionately long, being those of a full-grown man, so that they hung low down on either side, and by stretching out the spider-like fingers of his coarse, yellow-brown hands he could touch the ground with them without stooping.

His thoughts went back to the morning on which the old woman had gone up to his mother's baskets. Everything in her that he had made fun of—the long nose, the ugly hands, were now his—the long, wobbly neck being the only thing she had not given him.

“ Well now, my young prince, have you looked at yourself long enough ? ” said the barber, going up to Jacob, and looking mockingly at him. “ Truly, if one tried to fancy a figure of that kind, it would be impossible to imagine anything so droll. But I wish to make a proposal to you. My shop is very much frequented, but lately not quite as freely as I could wish ; this comes of my neighbour, Barber Schaum, having picked up a giant somewhere, which attracts customers to his house. Now, there is no art in growing into a giant, but to be such a mannikin as you are is quite another thing. If you will take service with me, little man, you shall have lodging, food, drink, clothes—in short, everything ; in return you will stand at my door in the mornings, and invite the passers-by in ; you will

prepare the shaving soap, hand the towels to customers, and, be assured, we shall answer one another's purpose capitally. I shall get more customers than my friend with his giant, and everyone will be delighted to give you a tip."

Jacob was inwardly greatly incensed at this offer of becoming the barber's decoy-bird ; but, as things were, must he not patiently put up with such insults ? So he merely said quietly to the barber that he had not time for such service, and went out.

If the old woman had had the power to distort his body she had not been able, as he felt, to harm his intellect. He was aware that he no longer thought or felt as he had seven years before ; on the contrary, he had grown wiser and more thoughtful during the interval. He did not mourn over his lost beauty, over his hideous figure ; his sole grief was that he was turned away like a dog from his father's house. He made up his mind that he would once more try to convince his mother of his personality.

He went up to her again as she sat in the market, and begged her to listen quietly to what he said. He reminded her of the day when he had gone off with the old woman, recalled to her memory all the several incidents of his childhood, then related to her how he had served the fairy for seven years as a squirrel, and how she had transformed him on account of his having laughed at her. The cobbler's wife did not know what to think ; everything he said agreed with the facts of his childhood, but when he went on to say that he had been a squirrel for seven years she exclaimed : " That is impossible ; there are no such things as fairies," and when she looked at him she felt so horrified that she could not bring herself to believe that this ugly dwarf was

really her son. At last she decided that it would be best to speak about it with her husband, and, collecting her baskets, she told the dwarf to come with her.

On reaching the cobbler's stall she said to her husband : " See, this fellow will insist that he is our lost son. He has told me everything : how he was stolen from us seven years ago, and how he has been bewitched by a fairy."

" Has he indeed ? " interrupted the cobbler angrily. " He has told you all this, has he ? Wait a minute, you rascal ! Why, only an hour ago I related it all to him, and now he tries to befool you ! You have been bewitched, have you, my little son. Wait a bit, and I will bewitch you again." And, so saying, he caught up a bundle of straps, and, going up to the dwarf, dealt him such blows on his humped back and long arms that poor Jacob cried out for pain, and ran away, weeping.

In that town, as elsewhere, there were but few compassionate souls ready to help a fellow-creature in misfortune who at the same time bore anything laughable about his person. And so it came to pass that the poor dwarf had to go the whole day without food or drink, and when night came, hard and cold as they were, the steps of a church were all he had to lie upon.

Awakened next morning by the first rays of the sun he began seriously to consider, since his father and mother had repudiated him, what he had better do to earn a living. He was too proud to hire himself out as a barber's signboard or as a buffoon, earning money, in short, by exhibiting himself ; but what was he good for ? Suddenly it occurred to him that while serving as a squirrel he had become accomplished as a cook, and he very justly thought he might safely hope to get employment in this way. He determined, therefore,

to turn his skill to account ; and as soon as the morning had really begun, and the streets were growing busy, he went first into the church to perform his devotions, and then started on his errand. The Duke, who was governor of the country, was a notoriously good feeder and lover of dainty dishes, who delighted in a good table, and sent for cooks from all parts of the world.

Jacob now repaired to the Duke's palace. On reaching the entrance gates the sentries asked him what he wanted, and made fun of him ; he replied that he wished to see the chief cook. So they laughed, and led him across the fore-court ; and there was more laughter, as the servants all stood still, and looked after him as he passed. By degrees quite a crowd of serving-men of all classes gathered in the rear, and followed him up the palace steps ; the grooms threw down their curry combs, the couriers ran as fast as they could, the carpet-layers forgot to beat their carpets ; everybody rushed and pushed, thronging to the spot as if the enemy were before the gates, while the cries of " A dwarf ! a dwarf ! Have you seen the dwarf ? " rang through the air.

The steward appeared at the door of the palace with an angry expression on his face and a huge whip in his hand. " In the name of Heaven, you dogs, what is all this noise about ? You know very well that your master is still sleeping ! " Therewith he lifted his whip, and let it fall heavily on the shoulders of some of the crowd. " Ah, sir," they cried, " look ! Do you not see ? We are bringing you such a dwarf as you have never seen in your life before ! "

The steward had the greatest difficulty in refraining from laughing right out when he caught sight of the little figure, but he feared to compromise his dignity by showing his amusement. He drove the onlookers

away, therefore, with his whip, and, leading the dwarf into the house, asked him his business. When he heard that he wanted to interview the head cook he answered : " You make a mistake, my little man ; it is to me that you ought to address yourself. You wish to become Court dwarf to the Duke ; is it not so ? "

" No, sir ! " answered the dwarf. " I am an accomplished cook, and experienced in the preparation of all kinds of rare dishes ; will you kindly take me to the chief cook ? possibly he may be able to make use of my skill. "

" Everyone to his taste, my little man ; but let me tell you that you are ill advised in your choice. In the kitchen ! Why, as dwarf to the Duke you would have had no work, food and drink to your heart's content, and beautiful clothes. However, we shall see. Your skill, I fancy, will hardly be equal to what is required for a master cook to one like my master, and you are too good for a scullion. "

So saying the steward led him by the hand into the chief cook's apartments.

" My lord, " said the dwarf, bowing so low that his nose touched the carpet, " are you in want of a first-rate cook ? "

The head cook looked at him from head to foot, and then burst out laughing. " What ! you a cook ? " he said. " Do you imagine that our stoves are low enough for you even to be able to see the top of one of them, even if you stood on tiptoe or managed to get your head out of your shoulders ? No, no, my dear little man ; whoever sent you to hire yourself out as a cook was making fun of you. "

The head cook again laughed heartily as he spoke, and the overseer of the palace and all the servants who were present joined in.

The dwarf, however, was not to be put out of countenance. "For a house where there is plenty an egg or two, a little flour and spice, a little syrup and wine do not make much difference," he said; "give me some delicacy to prepare, and let me have the necessary ingredients for it, and it shall be done in quick time before your eyes, and you will be obliged to confess that I have every right to call myself a cook."

Such and similar speeches did Jacob make use of, and it was worth seeing how his little eyes sparkled and his long nose waggled backward and forward as he spoke, while his thin, spider-like fingers moved in concert with his words.

"Very well, then," said the head cook, taking the steward's arm; "I will do it for the sake of the joke." "Let us go to the kitchen." They traversed several halls and passages, and at last came to the kitchen. This was a spacious apartment, splendidly fitted up; twenty fires were going continually, a stream of clear water, which served also as a fish-pond, ran through the middle; all the stores were kept in cupboards made of marble and precious woods; and on either side were ten adjoining rooms, wherein were preserved all the most costly and delicious things—brought from every country, whether in the East or the West—that could be found to please the palate. Kitchen servants of every rank were running hither and thither, with bustle and clatter of pots and pans, forks and ladles, but when the head cook appeared there was an instantaneous lull, the servants all stood motionless, and the only sounds to be heard were the crackling of the fires and the rippling of the stream.

"What has his Highness ordered for breakfast this morning?" asked the chief of the head breakfast cook, who was an old hand.

"He has been pleased to order Danish soup and red Hamburg dumplings."

"Well," said the chief cook, "do you hear that? Do you trust yourself to prepare these difficult dishes? The dumplings will certainly be more than you can accomplish, for the recipe is a secret."

"Nothing easier to make," replied the dwarf, to everybody's astonishment, but, when a squirrel, he had often made both these things; "nothing easier. Let someone bring me for the soup such and such herbs, this and that spice, the fat of a wild boar, roots, and eggs; for the dumplings," he added in a lower voice, that only the chief and the head breakfast cook might hear him, "for the dumplings I require several kinds of meat, some wine, ducks' grease, ginger, and a certain herb called 'stomach-comforter.'"

"By St Benedict! what wizard taught you that?" cried the cook in astonishment. "He has mentioned everything to the smallest item, and the herb you name we ourselves did not know, but that must make them even more palatable. Why, you are a perfect marvel of a cook!"

"I should never have believed it," said the chief. "But let him make proof of his knowledge; give him the materials and necessary utensils, and let him prepare the breakfast."

The servants did as they were told, and put everything ready on the kitchen table, but then it was found that the dwarf's nose scarcely reached to the top of it. Accordingly they tied two chairs together, placed a marble slab across them, and then invited the strange little man to begin his vaunted work. Cooks, scullions, servants, and odd people of all kinds made a large circle round him as they looked on in admiring surprise at

the skill and quickness with which he did everything, and the cleanliness and neatness with which all was finished off. When he had the dishes ready for cooking he ordered them to be set on the fire, and to remain until he called out; then he began to count—one, two, three, and so on. When he came to five hundred he cried "Stop," the saucepans were lifted off, and he invited the chief cook to taste.

The head breakfast cook ordered a servant to bring him a gold spoon, which he rinsed in the brook, and handed to the chief cook; the latter stepped solemnly forward, took a taste of the dishes, closed his eyes, licked his lips with delight, and exclaimed: "Exquisite, by the life of the Duke, exquisite! Will you not also take a spoonful to taste, steward?"

The latter bowed, took the spoon, tasted, and was beside himself with gratification and pleasure.

"With all due respect to your art, my dear breakfast cook, allow me to say, although you are an experienced cook, that neither soup nor dumplings could you have made so inimitably!"

Then the cook himself tasted, and thereupon shook the dwarf's hand with respect, saying: "Little one, you are a perfect master of the art. Yes, that herb you put in gives a peculiarly charming flavour to everything."

At that moment the Duke's valet-de-chambre appeared on the scene with word that his master was ready for his breakfast. The food was now served up on silver dishes, and sent to the Duke. The head cook took Jacob into his room, wishing to converse with him, but they had hardly had time to say a paternoster through when a messenger arrived summoning the head cook to attend the Duke. He quickly attired himself in his ceremonial dress, and followed the messenger.

The Duke was looking extremely pleased. He had eaten up every bit off the silver dishes, and was just wiping his beard when the head cook came in.

"I have always been delighted with your cooking," he said to the latter; "but I wish to know who prepared my breakfast for me to-day? It has never tasted so delicious since I sat on the throne of my fathers; tell me the name of the cook that I may send him a present of a few ducats."

"It is a most curious tale, your Highness," answered the chief cook, and he related how a dwarf had been brought to him early that morning, how he persisted in being engaged as a cook, and how the whole thing had come to pass. The Duke was much astonished, and, ordering the dwarf to be brought, questioned him closely as to who he was and whence he came. Poor Jacob felt that he could not say that he had been bewitched and had formerly served as a squirrel, but he was near to the truth when he said he was now without parents, and that an old woman, with whom he had lived, had taught him cooking. The Duke plied him with no more questions, but amused himself with examining the extraordinary face and figure of his new cook.

"If you will stay with me," said the Duke, "I will give you fifty ducats a year, a suit for grand occasions, and two pairs of trousers into the bargain. I shall require you in return to prepare my breakfast every morning, and to arrange what I am to have for dinner, and generally to superintend the kitchen, and, since everyone in the palace has his own particular name given to him by me, you shall be called Nose, and receive the title of under-steward of the kitchen."

The dwarf threw himself down before the great Duke

of Naulonia, kissed his feet, and vowed to serve him faithfully.

So Jacob was now provided for, and he did credit to his post. It may be said, indeed, that the Duke was a changed man while Nose, the dwarf, was in his house. Formerly it had often pleased him to throw the plates and dishes that were placed before him at the heads of his various cooks; nay, he had even once hurled a baked calf's foot, which had not been made tender enough, so violently against the forehead of the head cook himself that the latter fell, and had to keep his bed for three days. The Duke, it is true, made good with handfuls of ducats the injuries he inflicted in his anger, but, nevertheless, there was not a cook in his service who did not come into his presence without fear and trembling. But since the dwarf had been there it was as if everything had been transformed by magic. The Duke, instead of the usual three meals, now took five meals a day, in order to benefit to the full by the skill of this smallest of his retainers, and yet there was never the least sign of displeasure. On the contrary, he found everything rare and excellent, was pleasant and affable, and grew daily fatter in figure.

Very often, while at table, he would send for the chief cook and the dwarf, and, placing one on the right and the other on the left of him, thrust morsels of the most delicate dishes into their mouths with his own fingers, a favour which they both knew how to appreciate.

The dwarf became the wonder of the town. Earnest requests were made by people to be allowed to watch the dwarf cooking, and some of the most distinguished inhabitants received gracious permission to send their servants to take lessons of the dwarf, which brought

the latter in no small sum of money, for everyone paid half-a-ducat a day ; but so as to keep the other cooks in good humour, and not to arouse their envy, Jacob distributed among them what he received from the masters in return for his instruction.

And so, for nearly two years, Nose continued to live comfortably and much respected, but although his external affairs went well he was inwardly troubled by the thought of his parents. Nothing remarkable occurred until the event took place that I am about to relate. The dwarf was particularly clever and lucky in making purchases, and so, whenever he had the time, he went himself to the market to buy poultry and vegetables. One morning he went to where the geese were being sold, as he wanted a good fat one, such as the Duke liked. He went about for some time, examining the birds, and his appearance, far from exciting mirth and laughter as elsewhere, only earned him deference, for everyone knew him to be the Duke's master cook, and any one of the women thought herself fortunate if his nose turned in her direction.

At last he saw a woman sitting in a corner at the end of one of the rows who also had geese for sale, but did not, like the others, call out the price of her birds and invite people to buy. He went up to her, and weighed and measured her geese ; they were what he wished for, and he bought three, as well as the cage they were in, hoisted them on to his broad back, and started on his way home to the palace. It struck him as peculiar that only two of the geese screamed and cackled, as proper geese are in the habit of doing ; while the third sat quite silent, and wrapped up in herself, heaving sighs and groaning like a human being. " She is falling ill," he said to himself ; " I must make haste and kill and dress her."

But the goose answered in a perfectly clear and distinct voice :

“ If thou stick’st me,
I will bite thee ;
If thou wring’st my neck, thy bed
Soon shall be among the dead.”

Greatly terrified, Nose, the dwarf, set down the cage, and the goose looked at him with beautiful and intelligent eyes, and sighed.

“ Well, I never,” cried the dwarf, “ my lady goose can speak, then ! I should never have thought it ! But she need be in no anxiety ! I know what life is, and will certainly do no harm to so rare a bird ! But I could wager that she has not always been clothed with these feathers ; I was, indeed, myself once a miserable squirrel.”

“ You are right,” answered the goose, “ in saying that I was not born in this pitiable form. Alas ! as I lay in my cradle no one sang to me that Mimi, the daughter of the great Wetterbock, would be killed in a duke’s kitchen ! ”

“ Do not fear, dear lady,” said the dwarf consolingly. “ As true as I am an honourable man, and the under-steward of his Highness, no one shall touch you. I will make a place for you in my own apartments, you shall have all the food you want, and I will devote my leisure time to your entertainment ; I shall tell the other cooks that I am fattening up a goose with all kinds of special herbs for the Duke, and as soon as I have an opportunity I will set you free.”

The goose thanked him with tears. The dwarf did as he had promised, killed the other two geese, but built a little house for Mimi, under the pretext of preparing

her in some particular way for the Duke's table. He did not bring her such food as is ordinarily given to geese, but pastry and sweets, and as often as he could get away from work he went and talked to her, and tried to comfort her. She, on her side, told him her own history, and the dwarf learnt that she was the daughter of the great magician, Wetterbock, who lived in the island of Gothland. It appeared that he had had a quarrel with an old fairy, who managed by cunning and artifice to get the better of him, and who in revenge had changed her into a goose, and brought her all the way here. When Nose, the dwarf, had revealed his own tale to her she said: "I am not without some experience in these matters; my father, as far as he dared communicate them to us, gave my sister and me some directions about things of this kind. All you tell me about the scene in the market, your sudden transformation on smelling a certain herb, and some of the words of the old woman which you have repeated, prove to me that you have been bewitched by the agency of herbs; and that means that, if you can find the herb which the old fairy used for her evil purpose, you can set yourself free again." These words conveyed but little comfort to Jacob, for where was he to find that herb? But he thanked the goose, and buoyed himself up with some feeble hopes.

About this time the Duke received a visit from a neighbouring prince who was a friend of his. On this occasion he sent for the dwarf, and said to him: "Now has come the time when you will have to prove to me how faithfully you are willing to serve me, and what a master of your art you can show yourself to be. With the exception of myself no one keeps so sumptuous a table as this prince who is now with me. He is a con-

noisseur of elegant cookery, and understands what is what. Let the table, therefore, be daily such that he may be more and more filled with astonishment, and see, under pain of my displeasure, that, as long as he remains here, no dish is ever sent up a second time. My treasurer will hand over to you any money that you require, and if you find that you want gold and diamonds for frying—why, use them for that purpose. I would rather become a beggar than have to blush before him.”

Thus the Duke exhorted the dwarf, who replied, with a befitting bow: “It shall be as you command, your Highness; with God’s help I will do everything to gratify the taste of this Prince who so thoroughly understands what good cooking is.”

And now the little cook brought his whole art to bear on the preparation of the meals: he had no mercy on the King’s treasury, and still less on himself. He was to be seen throughout the day near the fire, enveloped in a cloud of smoke, and his voice was heard constantly ringing through the vaulted kitchen, for he ordered about the cooks and scullions as their lord and master. Truly, I might follow the example of the camel drivers from Aleppo, who, when in the course of their tales to the travellers they come to the description of meals, and wish to represent the magnificent style in which their characters live, take an hour to enumerate the different dishes that are served up, until they awaken such a great longing and even greater appetite in their hearers that the latter feel they must undo their stores and have a meal, of which the camel drivers get a generous share: but I refrain.

The princely visitor had already been a fortnight with the Duke, living in style and pleasure. They had no less than five meals a day, and the Duke was highly

satisfied with the dwarf's achievements, for he read enjoyment on the face of his guest. On the fifteenth day, however, it happened that the Duke sent for the dwarf while he was at table, and, introducing him to the Prince, asked the latter what he thought of the dwarf's cooking.

"You are a marvellous cook," answered the Prince, "and understand what good feeding means. Not once since I have been here have you repeated a dish, and everything has been splendidly prepared. But tell me, how is it that you have not given us the Queen of dishes, the 'Souzeraine' pie?"

The dwarf felt quite alarmed, for he had never heard of this queen of pies, but he collected himself, and answered: "Indeed, your highness, I trusted that the light of your countenance was to shine upon us for some time yet, and therefore I delayed to send up this dish, for with what dish could I honour you at parting but but with the queen of pies?"

"Is that it?" said the Duke, laughing, "And are you waiting for my death to honour me in like manner, for you have not yet set that dish before me either? But you must think of some other farewell expression of esteem, for to-morrow we must have the pie."

"It shall be as you command, your highness," replied the dwarf, and he retired. He felt anything but happy, for he had no idea how to make the pie in question; the day of shame and misfortune had come, and he went into his own room, and wept over his fate. The goose, who had leave to walk about his room, went up to him, and asked him what was the matter. "Stay your tears," she said after hearing about the Souzeraine pie. "That dish was frequently on my father's table, and I know pretty well what it is made of. You take this

and that, so much and so much, and if this is not exactly everything that is required for it, I do not imagine that their Highnesses have such acute tastes as to find it out."

On hearing this, the dwarf jumped up, overcome with joy, blessed the day on which he had bought the goose, and set about getting everything ready for the making of the pie. He first tried his hand on a small one, which turned out capitally, and the chief cook, to whom he gave some to taste, praised afresh the dwarf's unlimited genius.

The following day he made a larger sized pie and sent it up hot as it came from the oven, and decked with a wreath of flowers, to be placed on the table. He himself put on his best attire and went into the dining hall; then the chief carver was just in the act of cutting up the pie and serving it out with a silver scoop. The Duke took a large bite at his, and after swallowing it, threw his eyes up to the ceiling, and cried: "Ha, ha, ha! this is rightly called the Queen of pies, and my dwarf is the king of cooks; is it not so, dear friend?"

The guest took a small bite of his, tasted it carefully, and then smiled derisively to himself. "It is capitally made," he answered, pushing his plate away from him, "but it is not altogether the Souzeraine; I thought how it would be."

The Duke frowned with displeasure, and crimsoned with shame. "Dog of a dwarf!" he cried, "how have you dared to act like this towards me? I have a good mind to have your great head chopped off as a punishment for your bad cooking."

"Indeed, your highness, believe me, I have made the dish according to the strictest receipt, and it must be right!" said the dwarf, trembling.

"It is a lie, you villain!" cried the Duke, hurling him away with a kick, "otherwise my guest would not have said that something was missing. You yourself shall be cut up and made into a pie!"

"Have pity!" cried the dwarf, and he crawled on his knees to the Prince, and embracing his feet. "Say, I beseech you," he begged, "what is missing in this dish that it does not please your palate? Do not let me die for the sake of a handful of meat or flour."

"It is of no use, dear Nose," said the stranger, laughing. "As I knew yesterday, you cannot make this pie as my cook does. Know, then, that what is missing is a herb, that is not known in this part of the country, the herb Sneeze-with-pleasure, and without this the dish misses the proper seasoning, and your master will never know, as I do, what it tastes like."

Then the Duke flew into a passion. "But I will have it, and eat it," he cried, with flashing eyes. "I swear, on my honour as a prince, that I will either set the pie before you to-morrow, or this fellow's head shall be nailed on to the gate of my palace. Be off, you dog; I will give you another four and twenty hours of grace."

And the dwarf went out, and once more retired to his little room, and made his lament to the goose, telling her that he must die.

"Is that all that is the matter?" she replied. "Then I can certainly help you, for my father taught me to know every herb. At another time you might, perhaps, have been given over to death, but, fortunately, it is the new moon just now, and about the time when the herb blooms. Tell me, are there any old chestnut-trees near the Palace?"

"Oh yes," answered Nose, his heart growing lighter. "About two hundred paces from the Palace, there is a

large clump of them beside the lake. But why do you ask this ? ”

“ Because this herb only grows at the foot of chestnut-trees,” said Mimi. “ Therefore let us lose no time in going to look for what you want. Carry me in your arms, and set me down when we are outside, and I will look for you.”

He did as she told him, and went with her to the gate of the Palace. But there the sentry held out his weapon, and barred the way, saying : “ My good Nose, it is all over with you, and out of the palace you may not go. I have the strictest orders to that effect.”

“ But surely I may go into the garden ? ” answered the dwarf. “ Be so good as to send one of your comrades to the overseer, and ask him if I may be allowed into the garden to look for herbs.”

The sentry complied with this request, and permission was brought back, for, as the garden was surrounded by high walls, there could be no thought of escape that way. When Nose and Mimi had reached the open, he set the goose down carefully, and she went off quickly towards the lake where the chestnuts stood. He followed her with a beating heart, for it was his last and only hope ; if the herb were not found, his fate was decided, for he would throw himself into the lake rather than have his head cut off. But the goose sought in vain, she walked carefully about under all the chestnut-trees, and turned over every blade of grass with her beak, but nowhere could she see the herb, and she began to weep with pity and sorrow, for the evening was already growing darker, and everything more difficult to distinguish.

Then the dwarf's eyes wandered across the lake, and suddenly he cried out : “ Look, look ! there is another

large old tree over there : let us go and look, perhaps my good luck is growing there." The goose hopped and flew along, he running after her as quickly as his little legs would carry him. The chestnut-tree threw a deep shadow, and it was so dark all around it that it was hardly possible to see a thing ; but suddenly the goose stood still, and flapped her wings with joy, poked her head into the grass, and pulled out something, which she handed gracefully to the astonished Nose, saying : " Here is the herb, and there is a quantity of it growing here, so that you need never run short."

The dwarf looked thoughtfully at the herb ; a sweet odour came towards him, which involuntarily reminded him of his transformation ; the stem and the leaves were a bluish green, and the flowers a brilliant red edged with yellow.

" Thanks be to God ! " he exclaimed. " It is quite miraculous ! Do you know, I believe that this is the same herb that changed me from a squirrel into this horrible form ; shall I try what it will do ? "

" Not yet," said Mimi. " Take a handful of the herb, and let us go to your room, and gather your money and all your other things together, and then we will try the effect of the herb."

And so they went back together to the dwarf's room, and one could have almost heard the beating of his heart, so agonising was his suspense. After having tied up his savings, which amounted to fifty or sixty ducats, and some clothes and shoes into a bundle, he said : " If it please God, I shall now be rid of this burden ! " And with these words he plunged his nose into the herbs, and drew in their scent.

Then it seemed as if all his limbs began to crack, and lengthened out ; he felt his head rise up out of his

shoulders ; he looked sideways at his nose, and saw it growing smaller and smaller ; his chest and back began to get flatter, his legs to get longer.

The goose, meanwhile, looked on with astonishment. " Oh ! " she exclaimed, " how tall, how handsome you are ! God be thanked, there is nothing now left of your former self ! "

Then Jacob was overcome with joy and thankfulness, and he folded his hands together, and prayed. But his happiness did not cause him to forget his friend Mimi, the goose, and the thanks he owed her ; his heart, it is true, was yearning after his parents, but gratitude was stronger still, and he said : " Whom have I to thank but you that I am myself once more ? Without you I should never have found this herb ; I should for ever have remained in my dwarf's form, if I had not perished under the axe of the executioner. But I will pay it all back to you, for I will take you to your father, and he, who is so versed in all kinds of magic, will have no difficulty in restoring you also to your rightful form." The goose shed tears of joy, and gladly accepted his offer. Jacob succeeded in passing out of the palace, wholly unrecognised, carrying the goose with him, and he then made his way towards the shore, where Mimi's home was situated.

What further need have I to tell of their journey, happily ended ; of Mimi's father, who released her from her enchantment and loaded Jacob with presents ; of Jacob's return to his native town ; and of the delight with which his parents recognised their lost son in this handsome young man ; and of how he was able with the presents that Wetterbock had given him to buy a shop ; and how he became rich and happy ? Only this much more will I relate, that after his escape from the palace

there was a terrible commotion, for when on the following morning the Duke was preparing to carry out his threat, and, the herb not having been found, to cut off the dwarf's head, the latter was nowhere to be found. The Prince declared that the Duke had sent him away secretly, so as not to deprive himself of his best cook, and accused him of breaking his oath. In consequence of this there arose a great war between these two princes, which is known in history as the "Herb-war." A great many battles took place, but at last peace was made, and this peace was called the "Pie-peace," for on the occasion of their reconciliation the Prince's cook made the Souzeraine, the queen of pies, which the Duke greatly enjoyed.

And so it is that smallest causes often give rise to the greatest events, and this, my lord, is the history of Nose, the dwarf.

This was the story told by the slave from Frankistan. When he had finished the Sheik, Ali Banu, commanded that fruit should be handed to him and the other slaves, and he himself conversed with his friends while they ate. The young men, whom the old man had brought in, were loud in their praises of the Sheik, his house, and everything belonging to it. "Certainly," said the young scribe, "there is no more pleasant way of passing the time than by listening to stories. I could sit here for days, my legs tucked under me, one arm supported on a cushion, my head in my hand—and, if possible, the Sheik's big hookah at my side—listening to stories: to my mind life in Mohammed's garden must be some hing like that."

"As long as you are young and able to work," said the old man, "you cannot seriously desire such an

indolent life. But I admit that there is a peculiar charm about listening to tales. Although I have heard of many things in my life, and am now an old man (for I am about to enter my seventy-seventh year), when the story-teller sits at the corner with a large circle of listeners around him, I am yet not ashamed to sit down with them and to listen. I can actually imagine that I have taken part in these events which are being narrated. I live with these men, with these strange spirits, fairies, and people, who are not to be met with every day of one's life, and afterwards, when one is lonely, the material is there to enable him to repeat it all to himself, like the wanderer who has equipped himself well for his travels through the desert."

"I have never thought of it in that light," answered another of the young men, "nor considered wherein the charm of such stories actually lies. But that is my case exactly. Even as a child, when I became fretful, a story would silence me. At first I was quite indifferent as to the subject, as long as it was the story of some happening. How often have I listened, without any weariness, to the fables invented by wise men, in which they hid the kernel of their wisdom—the tale of the fox and the foolish raven, of the fox and the wolf, and many dozens of stories about lions and other animals. When I grew older, and mixed more with my fellow-men, these short stories no longer satisfied me; I wished them to be longer, and to tell about people and their strange destiny."

"Yes; I still well remember that time," interrupted one of his friends. "It was you who inspired us with the desire for stories of every kind. One of your slaves was as good at telling stories as a camel driver between Mecca and Medina is at talking; if he had finished

his work he would join us on the lawn in front of the house, and we would pester him with supplications until he began to tell stories, and went on and on till night fell."

"And what a new and unknown world he revealed to us," added the scribe, "a land of genii and fairies, adorned with all the marvellous beauties of the vegetable kingdom, and with rich palaces of emeralds and rubies, and peopled with gigantic slaves, who appeared with golden vessels full of every delicacy, when a ring was turned or the magic lamp was rubbed or a charm pronounced from the words of Solomon. Involuntarily, we felt ourselves transported to that land; we accompanied Sinbad on his strange adventures, we walked in the cool of the evening with Haroun-Al-Raschid, the wise master of the faithful, and made the acquaintance of his Vizier, Gieffar, as if he were one of us; in short, we lived in those tales, as a man lives in his dreams at night, and for us there was no more welcome time in the day than the evening when we met on the lawn, and the old slave told us stories. But tell us, old man, what was it exactly which gave us so much pleasure in hearing stories, so much so that to this day we can find no pleasanter form of entertainment?"

The stir which arose in the room at this moment, and a call to attention from the overseer of the slaves, prevented the old man from answering. The young people did not know whether to be pleased that they were to hear another story, or indignant at this interruption of their interesting discussion with the old man; but a second slave had already risen to his feet, and he began:

ABNER, THE JEW WHO SAW NOTHING.

SIR, I come from Mogador, on the shores of the Great Sea, and it was in the days when the most powerful Emperor Muley Ismael ruled over Fez and Morocco that these events took place about which it may please you to hear.

As you know, there are Jews all the world over, and they always remain Jews : they are sly, and have hawks' eyes for the smallest thing which could be used to their advantage ; they are cunning, and become more cunning the more they are misused ; indeed, they are conscious of their cunning, and somewhat proud of it. One evening, when Abner set out for a walk towards the gate of Morocco, he learnt that a Jew sometimes comes to grief through his cunning.

He stalked along, wrapped in a modest and not too spotless cloak, his pointed cap on his head. From time to time he took a furtive pinch from his gold snuff-box, careful not to let it be seen too much, and as he stroked his long beard there was a look of contentment on his expressive face, in spite of the expression of unceasing fear and anxiety and greed in his eyes, which, as they rolled restlessly from side to side, seemed constantly on the lookout for gain. He must have done a good bit of business that day, and that was, indeed, the case. He was a doctor and a merchant, and everything which brings in money ; and that day he had sold a slave with a secret fault, had bought a camel load of india-rubber at an exceptionally low price, and had prepared for a rich man who was sick his last drink, not to aid his recovery, but to speed his departure.

In the course of his walk he had just emerged from a little wood of palms and dates, when he heard behind him the loud cries of people who are giving chase ; it was a number of the imperial grooms, with the master of the horse at their head, who were glancing hastily from side to side, as if seeking something that was lost.

"Philistine !" shouted the Master of the Horse breathlessly, "have you seen one of the imperial horses, with saddle and trappings, pass by this way ?"

Abner answered : "The best galloper that exists ; his hoof is neat and small, his shoes are of purest silver, his coat shines like the gold of the great candlestick which is used in school on the Sabbath ; he is fifteen hands high, his tail is three and a half feet long, and the bar of his bit is of twenty-three-carat gold."

"That is he !" cried the Master of the Horse. "That is he !" shouted a chorus of grooms. "It is the Emir," cried an old hand ; "I have told Prince Abdallah a dozen times that he ought to ride the Emir on the snaffle. I prophesied that he would throw him. I know the Emir, and were I to pay for the pain in the Prince's back with my head, I would say so again. But tell me quickly, where has he gone ?"

"But I have seen no horse," answered Abner, with a smile ; "how can I tell whither this imperial beast has gone ?"

Astonished at this contradiction, the Gentlemen of the Stables were about to press Abner for a further explanation when a fresh event occurred.

By a strange coincidence, such as frequently arises, the Empress's favourite lap-dog had run away at precisely the same moment. A number of black slaves came running by, and while they were still a long way

off they cried: "Have you not seen the Empress's lap-dog?"

"It is not a dog you are looking for, Gentlemen," said Abner; "it is a bitch."

"Of course it is!" cried the first eunuch, overcome with joy. "Aline, where are you?"

"A tiny spaniel," continued Abner, "who has lately had puppies, with long ears, a feathery tail, and who limps on her right foreleg."

"That is she! her very self!" cried the group of black people. "That is Aline; the Empress had a fit of hysterics directly she was missed. Aline, where are you? What will happen to us if we return to the harem without you? Tell us quickly, which way was she running when you saw her?"

"I have seen no dog; I merely know that the Empress—God preserve her—does possess a spaniel."

Then the people from the stable, and from the harem were furious at Abner's impudence in jesting about imperial property, and, improbable as it seemed, they did not doubt for a moment that he had stolen both the horse and the dog. While the others continued their search, the Master of the Horse and the Chief Eunuch seized the Jew, who had a smile on his face which expressed both cunning and alarm, and led him into the presence of the Emperor.

Muley Ismael, when he had heard the whole story, was filled with rage, and called together his imperial council, over which, in consideration of the importance of the occasion, he himself presided. At the beginning of the debate the accused was condemned to receive fifty stripes on the soles of his feet. In vain did Abner scream and groan; in vain he alleged his innocence or swore to tell how the whole business had occurred;

in vain he quoted lines from the sacred books or the Talmud, and cried that: "The displeasure of the King is like unto the bellowing of a young lion, but his favour is like the dew on the grass," and prayed: "Do not close your hand when your eyes and your ears are shut." Muley Ismael merely made a sign, and swore by the beard of the Prophet and by his own beard, that the Philistine should pay for Prince Abdallah's bruises, and the Empress's hysterics, with his head, unless the lost ones were restored.

The palace of the Emperor of Morocco was still ringing with the painful cries of the tortured man, when the news arrived that the horse and the dog had been found. Aline had been surprised in the company of some pugs, who, although very respectable people, were not quite fit company for a lady of the court; and the Emir, after he had run till he was tired, had found the sweet-scented grass in the meadows, watered by the brook Tava, more to his taste than the imperial oats; just as the weary huntsmen of the Court, when they get lost in the chase, forget all the delicacies of their own table in their appreciation of the black bread and butter which they partake of in the peasant's hut.

Muley Ismael then demanded from Abner an explanation of his behaviour, and the latter was now, although somewhat at the eleventh hour, in a position to defend himself, which, after he had thrice bowed his forehead to the ground before His Highness's throne, he proceeded to do in the following manner:—

"Most powerful Emperor, Kings of Kings, Lord of the West, Star of Justice, Mirror of Truth, Source of all Wisdom, you, who are dazzling as gold, brilliant as the diamond, and hard as iron, hear me, now that it is permitted to your slave to lift his voice in your

glorious presence. I swear by the God of my fathers, by Moses and the Prophets, that I have never beheld with my bodily eyes your sacred horse, nor the beloved dog of my gracious Empress. But listen, and I will tell how it came about.

"I was taking a walk, in order to refresh myself after the cares and work of the day, thinking about nothing in particular, when, in the little wood where I had the honour to meet his magnificence the Master of the Horse, and his excellency the black overseer of the blessed harem, I noticed in the fine sand under the palm-trees the tracks of an animal. I, who am an expert in the tracks of animals, recognised them at once to be the footsteps of a small dog. A slight furrow was drawn across the unevenness of the sand, between the tracks of the feet. 'It is a female dog, I said to myself, who has had puppies so many weeks ago.' Some further tracks on either side of the fore-feet, where the sand appeared to have been lightly swept away, showed me that the animal had lovely, long, drooping ears; and when I noticed that at longer intervals the sand was more conspicuously brushed aside I thought to myself: 'This little person has a beautiful long-haired tail; it must look just like a regular plume, and I am sure it amused her to flick the sand with it from time to time.' It also did not escape my notice that one paw made a considerably deeper impression in the sand than the others; unfortunately, I could not fail to observe that the dog belonging to my gracious Mistress, if I may be permitted to mention it, limps somewhat.

"Concerning your Highness's steed, you must know that, as I was wandering along a path through the copse, my attention was drawn to the tracks of a horse. I

had scarcely glanced at the noble little hoof, with its dainty and yet strong paces, when I said in my heart: 'That must be a horse of the race of Tshenner, which is the most excellent breed of all. It is not yet four months ago that my most gracious Emperor bought a whole team of this breed from a Frankish prince; my brother Ruben was there when they struck the bargain, and my most gracious Emperor came out of the transaction with such and such advantage.' When I saw how wide apart and how regular the paces were, I naturally thought: 'That beast gallops well, excellently well, and only my Emperor is worthy to possess such an animal; and I recollected the words written in the Book of Job about the charger who "paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield."' And, seeing something shining on the ground, I bent down, as I always do, and, lo! it was a piece of marble, on which the shoe of the horse had left its mark as he raced along; so I gathered that he must have shoes of pure silver, for I know the marks made by every metal, whether real or false. The avenue down which I was walking was seven feet wide, and here and there I saw that the dust had been brushed off the palm leaves. 'The horse has evidently given his tail full play,' said I; 'it is three and a half feet long.' Under some trees, the lowest branches of which were about five feet from the ground, I noticed some leaves which had been newly stripped off. The back of this lightning steed must have stripped those off; therefore we have a horse here of some fifteen hands high. Look here, under the same trees,

little tufts of shining gold hair ; do you see ? This is a dun-coloured horse ! Just as I emerged from the copse, the impression of a piece of gold in the face of a rock caught my eye. ‘ You ought to know this mark,’ said I, and what was it ? A stone was marked on its surface with a gold streak of a hair’s-breadth, so fine, indeed, that the mannikin with the bundle of arrows on the gold coins of the seven united States of Holland could not have traced it with more exactitude. That mark must have been made by the bar of the bit worn by the flying steed ; he must have grazed it against that stone as he raced wildly forward. Those who know your tremendous love of splendour, O King of Kings, know that even the meanest of your horses would disdain to bite on anything but a golden bit. Thus did it come about, and if——”

“ Well, by Mecca and Medina ! ” cried Muley Ismael, “ that is what I call having eyes. You would do well to have eyes like that, master of the hounds, they would save you a pack of bloodhounds ; and you, minister of police, would see farther with them than all your constables and spies. Well, Philistine, in consideration of your exceptional ingenuity, you shall be treated with mercy. The fifty strokes which you justly received shall be reckoned as fifty zechins ; they will save you fifty, for you need now only pay fifty more down. Produce your purse, and remember for the future not to jest with our imperial property. After this we shall regard you with favour.”

The whole Court admired Abner’s ingenuity, for his Majesty had declared he was a clever fellow, but this did not compensate him for his sufferings, nor comfort him for the loss of his beloved zechins. As, with groans and sighs, he drew one after the other out

of his purse, weighing each one before parting with it on the tip of his finger, Shimri, the Court jester, still further insulted him by asking him if all his zechins would bear being tested on the stone on which Prince Abdallah's dun-coloured steed had tested his bit. "Your Eminence has acquired fame," he said. "I would bet fifty zechins that you are wishing you had held your tongue. But what says the Prophet? 'No chariot can overtake a word which escapes unawares, not even if drawn by four swift horses,' nor can a greyhound, Master Abner, even when he does not limp."

Not long after this event, which had been so painful for Abner, he was once more taking a walk in the green valleys between the lower heights of the Atlas mountains. There, just as on the former occasion, he was overtaken by a number of armed men, the leader of whom, as they rushed impetuously forward, cried out to him:

"Hi! my good friend, have you seen Goro, the Emperor's favourite black servant, pass by this way? He has run away, and is sure to have taken this road towards the mountains."

"I can't help you, general," answered Abner.

"Oh! are you not that cunning Jew who never saw the horse or the dog? For Heaven's sake, don't beat about the bush. The slave must have come this way; surely you still scent his blood in the air or perceive the tracks of his fleet foot in the long grass? Speak! The slave must have come this way. He alone can shoot sparrows with an air-gun, and that is his Majesty's favourite pastime. Speak! or you shall be seized and bound."

"But I cannot say that I have seen what I have not seen."

"Jew! for the last time, where has that slave flown to? Think of the soles of your feet—think of your zechins!"

"Oh, woe is me! Well, if you are absolutely determined that I shall have seen this sparrow shooter, run over there, and if you don't find him there he must be elsewhere."

"You have seen him, then?" the soldier roared at him.

"Well, yes, sir, if you insist upon it."

The soldiers hurried off in the direction which had been pointed out to them. But Abner went home, well satisfied with his trick. He was scarcely, however, a day older, when a number of the King's guard thrust their way into his house, polluting it, for it was the Sabbath, and dragged him into the presence of the Emperor of Morocco.

"Dog of a Jew!" fumed the Emperor, "you dared to send the imperial servants who were following a runaway slave, on a wrong track into the mountains, while the runaway was all the time hurrying towards the coast, and had nearly escaped on a Spanish ship. Seize him, soldiers! A hundred strokes on his soles! A hundred zechins out of his purse! The size of your purse shall diminish in proportion to the size to which your feet swell under the lash."

You know, O master, how they love a prompt administration of justice in the kingdom of Fez and Morocco, and poor Abner was, therefore, thrashed and fined, without his consent being asked in the matter. And he cursed his luck by which the soles of his feet, and his purse seemed always bound to suffer every time his Majesty took it into his head to lose something. As he limped grumbling and sighing from the

room, followed by the laughter of all the rough courtiers, Shimri, the jester, spoke thus to him: "Be content, Abner, ungrateful Abner; is it not sufficient honour for you that, each time our gracious Emperor, whom God preserve, loses anything, you are bound to suffer considerably as well? But if you will promise to reward me well, I will come always to your booth in the Street of the Jews an hour before the Lord of the West loses anything, and will say to you: 'Don't leave your hut, Abner—you know why; shut yourself into your little chamber till the sun has set; put yourself under lock and key.'"

This, O Master, is the story of Abner who saw nothing.

When the slave had finished, and silence once more reigned in the room, the young scribe reminded the old man that the thread of their discourse had been broken, and begged him to explain wherein lay the irresistible charm of a story.

"I will now tell you what it is," answered the old man. "The human mind is higher and more flexible than water, even though that substance both yields to every form, and now and then will penetrate through the most solid matter. The human mind is light, and free as the air, and, like the air, it becomes lighter and purer the more it raises itself from the earth. Hence it comes to pass that in every man there is a longing to raise himself above the things of everyday life, and to move more lightly, and more freely, in higher spheres, even though it be only in dreams. You yourself, my young friend, said: 'We lived in those stories, we thought, and felt, with those people,' and that is what constitutes the charm which they had for you. While you were listening to the slaves' stories, which

were only fiction, invented by someone once upon a time, you yourself were weaving romances. Your spirit did not remain with the objects around you, nor harbour the thoughts of every day. No; you experienced it all yourself; it was you yourself who met with this or that wonderful adventure, so entirely did you live with the man about whom the story was told. Thus, on the thread of such a story, your spirit raised itself above the things which appeared to you less beautiful, and less attractive; thus, subject to fewer limitations, it moved more freely in higher spheres; the story became a reality to you, or, if you prefer it, reality became a story, because your make-believe and your actual existence, met together in the story."

"I do not quite understand you," answered the young merchant, "but you are right in saying that we live in the story, or the story in us. I can still call to mind those good times. If we had the leisure we used to dream while still awake; we used to picture ourselves cast away on bare, inhospitable islands, and would speculate as to how we should set about procuring the necessaries of life, and many a time have we built ourselves huts in the dense osier-beds, and have made a meagre meal of a few miserable berries, even though we could have procured the best of everything, a hundred yards off, at home. Yes; there were times when we were merely waiting for a good fairy, or some strange dwarf, to appear and say to us: 'The earth will presently open, and will you then oblige me by stepping down into the Palace of Rock Crystal, where my servants, the monkeys, will be happy to attend to you?'"

The young people laughed, but admitted that their friend had spoken the truth. "Even now," continued

another, "even now the fascination still creeps over me from time to time. For instance, I should be very angry if my brother came rushing in at the door with some silly concoction of a story, and said: 'Have you heard of the misfortune of our neighbour, the fat baker? He has been doing business with a sorcerer, who, out of spite, has changed him into a bear, and now he is lying in his room, roaring in the most dreadful manner.' I tell you I should be furious, and reproach him for being a liar. But it would be a different matter if I were told that our fat neighbour had gone on a long journey to a far and unknown land, and had fallen there into the hands of a sorcerer, who had changed him into a bear. Gradually I should feel myself transported into the story; I should accompany our fat neighbour on his travels; I should share in his strange experiences; and, finally, it would cause me no surprise, to see him clapped into a bear's skin, and going about on all fours."

"And yet," said the old man, "there is a very engrossing kind of story, which contains neither fairies, nor sorcerers, nor crystal castle, and where no genii bring one marvellous things to eat. There is no huge roc, no magic horse; it is quite a different kind of story from what is usually called a fairy story."

"What do you mean by that? Do explain more clearly what you mean. A different kind of story from a fairy story," cried the young people.

"I think one ought to distinguish a little between *fairy stories* and *tales*, which are generally classified under the term *fiction*. If I were to say that I would tell you a fairy story you would naturally count on hearing of events which are more or less removed from the ordinary course of everyday life, and which take place

in a land not altogether of this world; or, to speak more clearly, you would expect in a fairy story, to meet people of a different nature from ordinary mortals. New forces, such as fairies and sorcerers, genii and spirits, influence the destinies of the men who appear in fairy stories; the whole tale has a weird, out-of-the-way character which is to be found in the patterns of our carpets, or in many of the pictures of our best masters, and which the Franks call 'arabesque.' The true Mussulman is forbidden to recreate the human form, which is the creation of Allah, in an imperfect manner in colours and paints; therefore the patterns woven into our materials consist of strange, intertwined trees and branches with human heads, and men whose bodies terminate in the form of a fish, or disappear in a bush—in short, forms which remind us of everyday life, and yet do not belong to it. Do you understand me?"

"I think I grasp your meaning," said the scribe, "so please go on."

"Fairy stories belong to this class of tale—they have a fabulous, unexpected, out-of-the-way strain about them—and as they do not belong to everyday life, they usually take place in strange lands, and are removed into years long gone by. Every country and every people have such stories—the Turks as well as the Persians, the Chinese as well as the Mongols; even in the land of the Franks there must be many such—at least so a learned Giaour once told me—but they cannot be as beautiful as ours, for instead of lovely fairies, who live in splendid palaces, they have enchanted women, whom they call witches, and hideous, malignant people, who live in miserable hovels, and who ride through the fog on a broomstick, instead

of driving through the blue ether in a chariot made out of a shell, and drawn by griffins. They have gnomes, too, and underground spirits—tiny, deformed people—who are always haunting someone. Those, then, are fairy stories; but the tales which go usually under the name of fiction are quite different. These are restricted in their action to this world, and concern themselves with everyday life; there is nothing wonderful about them, except perhaps in the sequence of events, which go to form the destiny of some man who becomes rich or poor, happy or unhappy, solely by means of his own inward forces, or by the strange development of his outward circumstances, and not owing to the influence of any spell or curse, nor through the intervention of fairies, as in fairy stories.”

“You are quite right!” replied one of the young people. “The splendid stories of Sheherazade, which are called the Thousand and One Nights, contain simple tales of that kind. Most of the adventures of King Haroun-Al-Raschid and his Vizier are like that. They sally forth in disguise, and witness this or that most extraordinary incident, which eventually develops itself quite naturally.”

“And yet you must allow,” continued the old man, “that stories of that kind form by no means the worst part of the Thousand and One Nights. And yet how different they are in their motive, in their development, in their whole character, from the fairy stories of Prince Biribinker, or the three dervishes with one eye, or of the fisherman who drew out of the sea a casket sealed with Solomon’s seal. But, after all, there is at the bottom a reason for the singular charm in both kinds of stories: it is because they introduce us to such strange and out-of-the-way experiences. In the fairy

story this out-of-the-way feeling is conveyed by an imaginary spell being introduced into everyday human life; in fiction everything happens according to natural laws, but in a surprising and unusual manner."

"How strange!" cried the scribe, "how strange, that the natural development of events should attract us quite as much as the supernatural in fairy stories. Why is this?"

"It is because of the descriptions of individual people," answered the old man. "In fairy stories, the miraculous plays such a large part, that the people have little scope for their own actions, and individual people and their characters can only be roughly delineated. It is different in an ordinary story, where the chief point of attraction lies in the fact that each one speaks and acts in accordance with his individual character."

"Why, yes; you are right!" replied the young merchant. "I have never taken the time to think it all out so exactly; I have merely noticed that I was bored by some stories, and enjoyed others, without exactly knowing why. But you have now given us a key to the secret, a test stone on which we can test our stories, and be correct in our criticism of them."

"Always do so," replied the old man, "and your enjoyment will increase the more you learn to think about what you have heard. But look, another man is rising to tell us a story."

This was the case. And another began:

THE YOUNG ENGLISHMAN.

SIR, I am a German by birth, and I have been too short a time in your country to be able to tell you a Persian fairy story, or an amusing tale about sultans and their viziers. You must, therefore, permit me to tell you something about my native land, which will, perhaps, cause you some little diversion. Unfortunately, our stories are not always so select as yours—that is to say, they do not tell about sultans or kings, or viziers or pashas, whom we call ministers of justice, or finance and privy councillors—but take place usually, when they do not treat of soldiers, in very ^{of} modest circles among the burghers.

In the south of Germany lies the little town of Grünwiesel, where I was born and bred. It is quite a small town, as they all are. In the centre, is a little market-place with a fountain, and on one side the little old Council House ; the houses of the magistrates and of the most important merchants surround the market-place, and the rest of the inhabitants live in a few narrow streets. Everyone is acquainted with everyone else ; everybody knows what is happening here, there, and everywhere ; and if the rector or the mayor or the doctor happen to have an extra dish to their meals, the whole town knows it by lunch-time. In the afternoon the women pay visits, as they say, and gossip over their strong coffee and their sweet cakes about this great event, and the conclusion is, that the rector has evidently been staking money in the lottery, and has won largely, in a most unchristian fashion, or that the mayor has allowed himself to be bribed, or that the doctor has been given a few gold pieces by the chemist to induce

him to prescribe the most expensive medicines. You can imagine, sir, how unpleasant it must have been for a well-regulated town like Grünwiesel, when a man arrived about whom nothing was known as to where he came from, what he wanted, or how he lived. It is true that the mayor had seen his passport, a paper which, in our country, everyone must have.

"Are the roads so unsafe, then," interrupted one of the Sheik's slaves, "that you need a firman from the Sultan to insure that you shall be treated with respect by the robbers?"

"No, sir," answered the German, "these papers do not protect us from thieves, but are issued for the sake of order, that it may be everywhere known who people are."

Now, the mayor had examined the passport, and had announced at an afternoon party at the doctor's that it was correctly signed from Berlin to Grünwiesel; but there was something behind all that, for the man looked suspicious. The mayor had the greatest reputation in the town, and it is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the man was henceforth regarded with suspicion. And his conduct could not alter the opinion of my countrymen. The stranger took a house, which had previously always stood empty, for a few gold pieces, and procured a waggonful of strange utensils—stoves, patent fireplaces, huge pots and pans, and such-like things, and lived henceforth quite alone. Yes; he even cooked for himself, and no human soul crossed his threshold, except an old man from Grünwiesel who got his stores of bread and meat and vegetables for him. And even this man might only come into the hall, and there the stranger took his purchases into his own hands,

I was a boy of ten years old when the man arrived in my native town, and I remember to-day, as if it were yesterday, the uproar which he raised in the little place. He did not go, like other men, in the afternoon to the skittle ground, nor in the evening to the public-house to discuss the news over a pipe like the others. In vain was he invited to a meal, or to drink coffee by the mayor, the magistrate, the doctor, and the rector in turn—he always excused himself. For this reason some held him to be mad, others thought he was a Jew, while a third faction stuck hard and fast to the opinion that he was a sorcerer or wizard. I grew to be eighteen or twenty years old, and the man was still always called the stranger in the town.

It happened, however, one day that some people arrived in the town with a number of strange animals. Such a company as this, always has a camel who can do gymnastics, a dancing bear, and a few dogs and monkeys, who look comic enough in men's clothes, and know all sorts of tricks. These people generally march through the town, and halt at a cross-road or an open square, where they attract attention by offensive sounds with a small drum and a pipe, make their troupe perform, and rake in a heap of money. But the troupe which arrived in Grünwiesel this time was especially famous for an enormous orang-outang, which was nearly as large as a man, walked on two legs, and knew how to do all sorts of tricks. This pantomime of dogs and apes, came in the course of time before the house of the stranger. When the drum and pipe began to sound he appeared, at first very indignantly behind the dingy windows, which were dimmed with age. But he soon became more friendly, and looked out of the window, to the astonish-

ment of everyone, and laughed heartily over the cleverness of the orang-outang. Indeed, he paid such a big piece of silver for the fun that the whole town spoke of it.

The next morning the troupe continued their tour. The camel was loaded with several baskets, in which the dogs and monkeys sat at their ease, but the keeper and the big ape marched behind the camel. But scarcely had a few hours elapsed since they had passed under the town gateway, when the stranger sent to the post, and, to the astonishment of the postmaster, ordered a carriage and post-horses, and, driving out at the same gate, he took the same road which the animals had taken. The whole of the little town was much annoyed that no one could find out where he had driven to. Night had already fallen, when the stranger arrived back at the gate in his carriage. But there was another person with him, who had his hat crammed low down over his face, and a silk handkerchief bound over his ears and mouth. The gatekeeper held it to be his duty to accost the other stranger, and to ask for his passport, but he answered very churlishly, and muttered in an absolutely incomprehensible tongue.

"It is my nephew," said the stranger in a friendly way to the gatekeeper, pressing a couple of silver coins into his hand—"it is my nephew, and as yet he understands very little German. He was merely swearing a little in his own tongue at being kept waiting here."

"Ah, if it's your nephew," replied the gatekeeper, "he can come in, then, without a passport. Of course, he will be living with you?"

"Of course," said the stranger; "and will probably be staying here for a good time."

The gatekeeper had no further objection, and the stranger and his nephew drove into the little town. The mayor and the whole town were, however, not so well pleased with the gatekeeper. He might at least have borne in mind a few words of the nephew's language. In that way they might have discovered to what country he and his uncle belonged. The gatekeeper was certain that it was neither French nor Italian, but to be sure it had something of the broad sound of English, and if he were not mistaken the young gentleman had said: "Goddam!" In this way the gatekeeper got himself out of a difficulty, and found a name for the young man. For now he was always spoken of as the young Englishman.

But neither was the young Englishman visible, either on the skittle ground, or at the drinking-bar, but in other ways he succeeded in giving people plenty to think about. It often happened that a horrible screaming and noise issued from the stranger's house, which had formerly been so quiet, so that the people assembled in crowds in front of the house, and remained gazing upwards. The young Englishman was seen through the windows in a red tail coat, and green trousers, with ruffled hair and a general appearance of abject terror, running with incredible speed from room to room; the old stranger ran after him, with a horse-whip in his hand. He often failed to catch him, but sometimes it appeared to the crowd in the street as if he must have overtaken him, for pitiful sounds of agony could be heard, and the crack of frequent lashes from the whip. The women of the little town were so much moved by this gruesome treatment of the strange young man, that at last they prevailed upon the mayor to take steps in the matter. He wrote a

note to the stranger, in which he reproached him in fairly forcible terms, for his disgraceful treatment of his nephew, and threatened, if such scenes occurred again, to take the young man under his special protection.

No one was more astonished than the mayor when, for the first time for ten years, he saw the stranger himself walking in to see him. The old gentleman excused his behaviour, by saying that he had been especially commissioned by the lad's parents to bring him up in that fashion. He was in most respects a clever, capable fellow, said his uncle, but he had a great difficulty in learning languages; the stranger wished so earnestly that his nephew should master German fluently, in order that he might later on take the liberty of introducing him into the society, of Grünwiesel, and yet the boy learnt the language so slowly, that there was often nothing to be done but to give him a sound thrashing. The mayor was perfectly satisfied with this explanation, recommended the old man to use moderation, and announced that evening in the taproom that he had seldom come across such an able and cultivated man as the stranger. "It is such a pity," he added, "that he goes so little into society; however, I think when the nephew begins to speak a little German he will join our circle more often."

The opinion of the little town was completely altered by this single incident. The stranger was held to be a clever fellow, people longed to become more intimately acquainted with him, and took it quite as a matter of course, when every now and then gruesome cries issued from the deserted house. "He is giving his nephew lessons in the German language," said the good folk of Grünwiesel, and no longer stopped to

listen. After about three months it appeared that the German lessons were at an end ; for the old man now went a step further. There was a broken-down old Frenchman living in the town who gave dancing lessons to the young people, and the stranger summoned him, and told him that he wished him to give his nephew lessons in dancing. He gave him to understand that the latter was very docile, but a little obstinate about dancing ; he had learnt dancing before, from another master, and had picked up such extraordinary figures, that he really could not appear like that in society. In spite of this the nephew thought himself a first-rate dancer, although his dancing had not the slightest resemblance to the waltz or the galop (the dances, O my lord, which are danced in my native land), nor did they even resemble the schottische or the 'deux-temps.' The old man further promised to pay a dollar for every lesson, and the dancing master was more than ready to undertake the instruction of this obstinate pupil. There was nothing in the world so extraordinary, so the Frenchman privately assured his acquaintance, than these dancing lessons. The nephew, who was a fairly tall and slight young man, only with rather short legs, appeared in a red tail coat and wide green trousers, with glacé kid gloves, and his hair beautifully curled. He spoke little, and in a foreign accent, and at first he was fairly docile and skilful ; then he suddenly began to hop round in the most ludicrous manner, and danced the wildest figures, cutting capers the while, so that the dancing master was absolutely stunned. If he attempted to correct the young man he drew off his elegant dancing shoes, and threw them at the Frenchman's head, and then started scampering round the room on all fours. When

he heard this noise the old gentleman suddenly appeared out of his room in a voluminous red dressing-gown, and a cap of tissue paper on his head, and laid the horsewhip on his nephew's shoulders with no gentle hand. The nephew then began to howl in the most fearful manner, and sprang on to the table and up on the high cupboard, and even on to the cross-bars of the window, jabbering in a strange, unknown tongue. But the old fellow in the red dressing-gown was not thwarted; he tore him down, thrashed him well, and tied his necktie tighter round his neck, by means of a buckle, the result of which was that he once more became docile and well-mannered, and the dancing lesson continued without further interruption.

When the dancing master had brought his pupil to the point where music might be introduced into the lessons, the nephew underwent a perfect transformation. A town musician was engaged, who was obliged to sit on a table in the drawing-room of the deserted house. The dancing master then represented the lady, for which role the old gentleman insisted that he should put on a lady's silk skirt and an East Indian shawl; the nephew asked him for a dance, and began to waltz round the room with him. He was a most violent and indefatigable dancer, and held the master tightly in his long arm, and though the wretched man groaned and screamed he was obliged to dance on and on till he sank down exhausted, or till the violinist's arm refused, out of sheer fatigue, to play another note. The dancing master very nearly succumbed after each lesson, but the dollar, which was duly paid to him, and the good wine which the old man provided, always tempted him to come again, even though he always

made up his mind the day before never to enter the deserted house again.

The people in Grünwiesel looked at the matter in quite a different light from the Frenchman. They thought that the young man showed great social talents, and the girls in the little town rejoiced that, in the present dearth of men, such an energetic dancer was to be had for the next winter.

One morning the maids came home from market with a wonderful story, which they related to their different mistresses. They had seen a magnificent glass carriage with beautiful horses standing outside the deserted house, and a servant in sumptuous livery stood at the horses' heads. Then the door of the deserted house had opened, and two beautifully-dressed gentlemen had stepped out, one of whom was evidently the old stranger, and the other the young gentleman who had learnt German with such difficulty and danced with such violence. The two men had stepped into the carriage, the servant had jumped up behind, and the carriage—just fancy!—had driven straight off to the mayor's house.

When the ladies heard this story from their maids they hastily tore off their cooking aprons and their slightly soiled caps, and put on their best clothes. "It is quite certain," they said to their families, who were rushing round arranging the reception-room, which also served as a common living-room—"it is quite certain that the stranger is now going to bring out his nephew. The old fellow was not so ready to cross our threshold ten years ago, but he shall be forgiven, on account of his nephew, who must be a charming person." So they chattered on, and exhorted their sons and daughters to behave very nicely if the strangers

came, to sit straight, and to choose their expressions more carefully than usual. And these quick-witted ladies in the little town were correct in their surmises, for the old gentleman drove round with his nephew to everyone in turn, in order to get into the good graces of the Grünwiesel families.

Everyone was full of the two strangers, and regretted not having long ago made the acquaintance of such pleasant people. The old gentleman proved to be a clever and sensible man, although it is true that he smiled a little at everything he said, so that one was not certain whether he were speaking seriously or not, but he discussed the weather and the neighbourhood and the summer festivities at the tavern on the hill with such shrewdness and weight that everyone was fascinated by him. But the nephew! He fascinated everybody, and won all hearts. As regards his appearance, his face could not be called handsome: the lower part, especially the jaw, was too prominent, and his complexion had rather a brownish hue; he also made every sort of strange grimace, occasionally squeezed up his eyes and gnashed his teeth—but the cast of his features was universally acknowledged to be uncommonly interesting. Nothing could be more free and supple than his figure. Certainly his clothes had rather a curious cut, but they suited him excellently. He rushed round the room with great vivacity, threw himself down on a sofa in one corner, or in an arm-chair in another corner, and stretched out his legs; but what would have been considered indecorous and distinctly vulgar in any other young man was only called eccentricity in this young man. “He is an Englishman,” they said; “they are all like that. An Englishman may lie down on a sofa, and go to sleep,

while ten ladies have nowhere to sit, and have to stand round him. One does not resent that sort of thing in an Englishman." He was very amenable to the old gentleman, his uncle, for when he began to hop round or to draw up his feet under him on the chair, which was what he liked doing, a serious look sufficed to bring him to order. And how could one take offence at his behaviour, when his uncle never failed to say to his hostess in each house : " My nephew is still rather raw and uneducated, but I have great hopes that society will lick him into shape, and make him more cultivated, and I especially recommend him to your kind care " ?

In this way the nephew was brought out into the world, and at this time, and for many a long day, the whole of Grünwiesel could speak of nothing else except this event. But the old gentleman did not stop here ; he seemed to have changed his whole mode of thinking and living. In the afternoons he would go up with his nephew to the rock tavern on the hill, where the most distinguished gentlemen of Grünwiesel used to drink beer, and amuse themselves at playing skittles. There the nephew proved himself to be a most adept master at the game, for he never threw down less than five or six. It is true that now and then he seemed suddenly possessed by some strange spirit : it might all at once occur to him to hurl the ball in among the skittles with the speed of an arrow, making the most awful noise the while ; or if he knocked over the king or all the other ninepins he would suddenly stand on his beautiful curly pate, with his legs in the air ; or if a carriage drove by he would leap up on to the box before one could say " Jack Robinson," and make faces at the people below him, then he would drive on

a bit farther, and jump down, and join the company once more.

On such occasions as these the old gentleman would be sure to apologise to the mayor and to the other men for his nephew's rudeness; but they only laughed, and put it down to his youth, declaring that they also had been as nimble-footed at his age, and they grew extraordinarily fond of the young jackanapes, as they called him.

But there were also times when they were not a little annoyed with him, though they dared not say anything, because the young Englishman was considered everywhere a pattern of good breeding and intelligence. For instance, it was the old gentleman's custom to go every evening with his nephew to the "Golden Stag," the chief inn of the little town. Although the nephew was still quite a young man he behaved just like an old hand, sat down behind his glass, cocked an enormous eyeglass, produced a tremendous pipe, which he lit, and puffed away at it with the worst of them. If the news were discussed, the peace, or the war, the doctor would give this opinion, and the mayor that one, and the other gentlemen would be filled with amazement at such deep political knowledge, but most likely it would suddenly occur to the nephew to hold quite a different opinion. He would then stroke the table with his hand, from which he never removed his glove, and gave the mayor and the doctor clearly to understand that they were in no way correctly informed on this subject, that he had heard quite another view of the matter, and had a more profound judgment. Then, in strange, broken German, he would give his opinion, which, to the great annoyance of the mayor, was pronounced by all to be excellent—for,

as an Englishman, he must naturally know best in every respect.

If the mayor and the doctor, not daring to give expression to their anger, sat down to a game of chess the nephew would sit behind them, and look over the mayor's shoulder through his big eyeglass, criticising this or that move, telling the doctor that he must do this or that, until both men were inwardly perfectly furious. Then if the mayor angrily challenged him to a game, in order to checkmate him, for he held himself to be a second Philidor, the old gentleman would buckle his nephew's tie more tightly round his neck, and he promptly became quite good and well-mannered once more, and the mayor was checkmated instead.

Up till now, cards had been played every night in Grünwiesel, the players staking half-a-kreuzer between them. The nephew thought that a contemptible business, and he staked whole crowns and ducats, and declared that no one could play as well as he, but he generally pacified the outraged gentlemen by losing enormous sums to them. They, on their part, did not scruple to win largely off him—for "he is an Englishman, you see, and, therefore, was born rich," they said, and shoved the ducats into their pockets.

Thus in a short time the stranger's nephew came before the notice of everyone in the town and in the whole neighbourhood. Within the memory of man no one could remember having seen a young man at all like this; he was the most extraordinary phenomenon that had ever been seen. One could not say that he had learnt anything except to dance a little. Latin and Greek were gibberish to him, as they say. He had to write something in some game at a party at the mayor's house, and it turned out that he could not

even write his name; he made the most shocking mistakes in geography, for it was immaterial to him whether he placed a German town in France or a Danish town in Poland; he had read nothing, studied nothing, and the rector often shook his head meditatively over the gross ignorance of this young man; but, nevertheless, everything that he said or did was considered perfect, for he was absolutely shameless in always persisting that he was in the right, and everything he said finished with: "I know best."

This state of things continued till the approach of winter, and then the nephew began to shine with even greater glory. Every party was considered dull where he was not of the number; people yawned if a more sensible man said anything, but if the nephew talked the greatest nonsense they were all ears. It now turned out that this immaculate young man was a poet, for hardly an evening passed that he did not draw a few papers out of his pocket, and read a sonnet aloud to the assembled company. There were certainly one or two people who declared that part of his poems were bad, and had no sense in them, while they were certain that they had read the other part somewhere else in print; but the nephew was in no way disconcerted, he read on and on, and then drew attention to the beauty of his verses, and every time he was enthusiastically applauded.

But the moment of his greatest triumph was at the Grünwiesel ball. No one could dance so quickly as he could, nor for so long a time. No one hopped round with so much dash, and yet with so much elegance as he. And, besides all this, his uncle dressed him always with great magnificence, and according to the latest fashion, and although the clothes never seemed to

hang well on his body everyone thought that everything suited him exquisitely. The men were certainly somewhat offended by the new fashion in which he stepped out at these dances. Formerly the mayor had always opened the ball in person, and the young people of highest rank had the right to arrange the other dances, but everything was different since this young foreigner had appeared. Without so much as "by your leave" he took the choicest of the ladies who happened to be near him by the hand, and planted himself with her at the top, and did whatever he liked ; in fact, he was lord and master and king of the ball. But as the ladies highly approved of these manners the men could make no objection, and the nephew was valued according to his own estimate of himself.

A ball of this kind seemed to afford the old gentleman the greatest satisfaction. He never took his eyes off his nephew, and constantly smiled to himself, and when the whole world rushed up to him to compliment him on this delightful and well-bred young man he could not contain his joy, but burst into a hearty peal of laughter, and looked very mischievous. The inhabitants of Grünwiesel ascribed this strange outburst of joy to his great love for his nephew, and took it all as a matter of course. Now and then, however, he was obliged to exercise his parental authority on his nephew, for in the middle of the most exquisite dancing the young man would suddenly take it into his head to make one wild spring on to the platform where the musicians sat, and, seizing the double bass from one of the performers, he would scrape on it in the most fearful manner ; or, all at once, he would change, and dance on his hands, with his feet in the air. On these occasions his uncle never failed to take him aside and

reproach him very seriously ; his necktie was then tightened round his throat, and he became once more quite well behaved.

This was the way the nephew behaved in society and at balls. It is always the case with all customs that the bad spread more easily than the good, for a new and remarkable fashion, even if it be a most ridiculous one, always infects young people who have not meditated much on themselves or the world. This was what happened in Grünwiesel, in consequence of the nephew and his strange habits. When the young people saw that the latter was rather looked up to than blamed for his awkward ways, his loud laugh, and foolish chattering, and his rough replies to his elders, and that all this was considered very witty, they said to themselves : " I can easily become as witty a knave as he is." Formerly they had been industrious, clever young people ; now they thought : " What is the use of learning if one is more successful when one is ignorant ? " They left their books, and loafed about in the streets and public squares. Formerly they had been well-behaved and civil, and had waited till they were spoken to, and had then answered agreeably and modestly ; now they mixed with the men, joined in their conversation, expressed their opinions, and even laughed at the mayor under his very nose if he said anything, and declared that they knew best.

Formerly the young folk of Grünwiesel had had a perfect horror of rude and vulgar behaviour ; now they sang all sorts of bad songs, smoked enormous pipes of tobacco, and frequented the lowest pothouses. They also bought themselves huge eyeglasses, although they could see quite well ; they cocked them in their

eyes, and thought themselves very fine, for they now resembled the famous nephew. At home, or when they were paying visits, they threw themselves down on the sofa in their boots and spurs, tipped up their chairs in a free and easy manner, put their elbows on the table and their head in their hands, and altogether cut a very pretty figure. It was in vain that their mothers and friends represented to them how foolish and unbecoming this behaviour was—they merely appealed to the nephew's brilliant example. It was in vain that they were told that certain national defects of politeness were forgiven the nephew as an Englishman; the young folk of Grünwiesel asserted that they had every bit as much right as the best Englishman to be as ill bred as they liked in this witty manner; in short, it was a real grief to see how the manners and good customs deteriorated in Grünwiesel in consequence of the nephew's pernicious example.

But the young people's delight in their rough and unrestrained life did not last long. The following incident suddenly changed the whole aspect of things. The winter amusements were to end with a large concert, in which the performers consisted partly of the town bandsmen and partly of certain clever amateurs belonging to Grünwiesel. The mayor played the violoncello, the doctor was a first-rate performer on the bassoon, and the apothecary could handle a flute, although he had really no turn for music; some of the young ladies in Grünwiesel had also practised a few songs, and everything had been carefully prepared. The old stranger then remarked that a concert of this kind was sure to be a success, but that it was a great mistake to have no duet, for a duet was an essential item in every well-organised programme. This remark

caused great distress. To be sure the mayor's daughter sang like a nightingale, but where could one procure a gentleman who could sing a duet with her? At last they determined to fall back on the old organist, who had once upon a time possessed a wonderful bass voice, but the stranger declared that this was not necessary, as his nephew was a very good singer. The world was not a little amazed at this new accomplishment which was attributed to the young man. He was made to sing something on trial, and, except for a few eccentricities, which were put down as being English, he sang like an angel. The duet was practised in all haste, and the evening at length arrived in which the ears of Grünwiesel were to be regaled with this magnificent concert.

Unfortunately, the old stranger could not be present at his nephew's triumph, as he was ill; however, he gave a few directions concerning his nephew to the mayor, who visited him an hour before the concert. "He is a good soul, my nephew," he said, "but now and then he takes all sorts of strange ideas into his head, and begins playing the fool; that is why I am so sorry not to be able to go to the concert, for when I am there he keeps a watch on himself—and he has good reason to do so! And I ought to tell you, your honour, that he is not like this out of mere love of mischief, but it is physical, and part of his whole nature. Now, my lord mayor, if he takes it into his head to climb up on to a music-stand, or if he insists on playing the double bass, or anything of that kind, will you oblige me by loosening his high stock necktie? or, if that does not make him better, if you will take it right off you will see how good and well behaved he will become!"

The mayor thanked the sick man for his confidence, and promised, in a case of necessity, to do as he had recommended.

The concert-room was full to overflowing; the whole of Grünwiesel and the neighbourhood had assembled there.

All the huntsmen, the parsons, the officials, and the farmers within three hours' distance, with their numerous families, had streamed in to share this rare treat with the inhabitants of Grünwiesel. The town band played splendidly, and, when they had finished, the mayor stepped on to the platform, and gave a violoncello solo, accompanied by the apothecary on the flute; then the organist sang in his deep bass, and received a round of applause, and the doctor's performance on the bassoon was also heartily clapped.

The first part of the concert was over, and everybody was eagerly looking forward to the second part, in which the young stranger was to appear in a duet with the mayor's daughter. The nephew had appeared in a magnificent get-up, and had already attracted everyone's attention. To begin with, he had settled himself, without as much as "By your leave," into a splendid arm-chair, which was reserved for a duchess who lived in the neighbourhood; he stretched out his legs, and eyed everyone through a huge perspective glass, which he used as well as his eyeglass, and played with an enormous butcher's dog which he had brought with him, although it was prohibited to bring dogs into the concert-room. The duchess, for whom the arm-chair had been prepared, at length arrived, but the one person who showed no inclination to stand up or to make room for her was the nephew; on the contrary, he settled himself more comfortably into his

chair, and no one dared to say anything to the young man. The distinguished lady was obliged to sit among the other women of the little town on an ordinary cane chair, and she must have been not a little annoyed.

During the mayor's splendid performance, and while the organist was producing wonderful bass notes, and even while the doctor was playing marvellous flourishes on the bassoon, and everyone was holding his breath and listening, the nephew made his dog fetch his handkerchief, or chatted quite loudly with his neighbours, so that everybody who did not know him was astounded at this young man's extraordinary manners.

It is no wonder, therefore, that all were full of curiosity as to how he would get through his duet. The second part began; the town band had finished a short overture, and the mayor now stepped across to the young man with his daughter, and handed him a sheet of music, saying: "Will it suit you to sing the duet now?" The young fellow laughed, ground his teeth, and sprang on to the platform, while the two others followed him to the music-stand, and the assembled company waited in a state of great expectation. The organist beat time, and made a sign to the nephew to begin. The latter stared at the music through his big eyeglass, and uttered most horrible and pitiable sounds. But the organist shouted at him: "Two tones lower, my dear sir; you have got to sing C—C!"

However, instead of singing C the nephew took off one of his shoes, and hurled it at the organist's head, so that the powder flew round. When the mayor saw this he thought: "Ah, now his physical affliction is coming on," and, springing at him, seized him by the throat, and loosened his necktie; but this only made

things worse. He no longer spoke in German but in some utterly strange tongue, which no one understood, and made huge jumps. The mayor was in despair at this awkward interruption, and made up his mind that something must have specially upset the young man, and that he would have to entirely take off his necktie. But hardly had he done this than he was paralysed with horror, for, instead of a human skin and complexion, he saw that the young man's throat was covered with dark brown fur, and as he at the same time began to give wilder and higher jumps he thrust his gloved hands through his hair, and took it off! And, oh wonder! this beautiful hair was a wig, which he threw into the mayor's face, and one saw that his head was covered with the same brown fur.

He knocked over chairs and tables, threw down the music-stand, trampled on fiddles and clarionettes, and seemed like one mad. "Catch him, catch him!" shouted the mayor, quite beyond himself. "He is out of his mind, catch him!" But that was no easy matter, for he had taken off his gloves, and revealed nails on his hands, which he thrust into people's faces, and scratched them in the most pitiable manner. At last a plucky huntsman succeeded in seizing him. He squeezed his long arms together, so that he could only kick out with his feet, and laugh and scream in his hoarse voice. The people collected round him, and stared at the strange young man, who now no longer looked like a human being. But a learned gentleman belonging to the neighbourhood, who possessed a museum of natural history and a number of stuffed animals, stepped nearer, and, examining him more closely, cried in great astonishment: "My God! ladies and gentlemen, how did you come to bring a

beast like this into a respectable community? That is an ape belonging to the *Homo Troglodytes Linnaei*. I will give six dollars for him if you will sell him. I should have him stuffed for my collection."

Who can describe the astonishment of Grünwiesel when it heard this? "What! An ape, an orang-outang, in our midst? The young stranger is an ordinary ape!" they cried, and stared at each other in amazement. They could not believe it, they could not trust their ears; the men examined the animal more closely, but it was, and remained, an absolutely ordinary ape.

"But how is it possible?" cried the lady mayoress. "Has he not often read me his poems? Has he not often lunched with me like any other person?"

"What!" said the doctor's wife, screaming with excitement, "what! Has he not many a time taken coffee at our house, and smoked with my husband, and talked in the most learned fashion?"

"What! Is it possible?" yelled the men. "Has he not played at skittles with us at the Rock Tavern, and argued over politics with the best of us?"

"What!" they all wailed. "Has he not danced at our balls? An ape! An ape! It is a miracle! It is witchcraft!"

"Yes; it is witchcraft, the work of the devil," said the mayor, producing the necktie belonging to the nephew or the ape. "Look! In this tie lay the whole charm which made us like him. There is a broad strip of elastic parchment inscribed with all sorts of wonderful signs. I think it must be Latin. Can no one read it?"

The rector, a learned man, who had often lost a game of chess with the nephew, stepped forward, examined the parchment, and said: "Not at all; they are

only Latin characters. It reads : ' The ape is a comical animal, especially when he gnaws an apple.'

" Yes ; it is a hellish imposition, a kind of witchcraft," he continued, " and he must be punished, as a warning to the whole world."

The mayor was of the same opinion, and set out at once to the stranger's house, for it was proved now that he was a sorcerer ; six soldiers carried the ape, and the stranger was to be tried immediately.

They arrived at the deserted house surrounded by an enormous crowd of people, for everyone wanted to see how the matter would end. They knocked at the door, they rang the bell, but all in vain ; no one appeared. The mayor, in a rage, ordered the door to be broken in, and rushed up to the stranger's room. However, there was nothing to be seen but all sorts of old pieces of furniture. The stranger was not to be found. But on his writing-table lay an enormous sealed letter, directed to the mayor, who immediately tore it open. It read as follows :—

" My dear friends in Grünwiesel,—By the time you read this I shall no longer be in your little town, and you will by then have discovered who my dear nephew is and what is his native land. Take the joke, which, with your permission, I shall share with you, as a lesson not to invite into your circle a perfect stranger who thinks of no one but himself. I myself had too much self-respect to join in your eternal gossiping, your bad manners, and your ridiculous way of going on. That is why I trained as my representative the young orang-outang who succeeded in so happily gaining your affections. Farewell, and make the best use you can of this lesson."

The inhabitants of Grünwiesel felt they had been put to shame before the whole countryside. Their only consolation was, that the whole business had been worked by supernatural means. The young people of Grünwiesel were, above all, ashamed of themselves for having imitated the monkey's bad habits and bad manners. They no longer leaned their elbows on the table or tipped up their chairs, they were silent until spoken to, and gave up wearing an eyeglass; in short, they became as nicely behaved and well mannered as before, and if ever one of them again affected such rude and absurd manners the people of Grünwiesel said: "He is an ape." The ape, therefore, who had so long played the part of the young gentleman was handed over to the learned man who possessed a museum of natural history. This gentleman allowed him the run of his yard, fed him, and showed him as a curiosity to every new-comer, and he is to be seen there to this day.

There was a burst of laughter in the room when the slave had ended his story, and the young men joined in the merriment.

"There must be strange people among these Franks, and I must say I prefer the company of the sheik and mufti in Alexandria to that of the rector and the mayor and their foolish wives in Grünwiesel!"

"You certainly are right," agreed the young merchant; "I would not be seen dead in those Frankish lands. The Franks are a rough, wild, barbarous people, and it must be dreadful for a cultivated Turk or Persian to have to live there."

"You will soon hear about that," the old man assured them. "From what the overseer of the slaves

told me I think that handsome young man over there will have much to tell about Frankish lands. He was there for a long time, although he is by birth a Mussulman."

"What! That one, the last of those sitting in that row? It is certainly a shame that the Lord Sheik should set that one free. He is the handsomest slave in the whole land. Look at that spirited face, those fearless eyes, that beautiful figure! He might be given quite light work. He could swing the punkah or be a pipe carrier. Such an office would be child's play, and truly a slave like that is an ornament to the whole house. And he has only had him three days, and is now releasing him? It is foolish, nay, wicked!"

"Yet you must not blame him who is wiser than anyone in Egypt!" said the old man with solemn emphasis. "Have I not already told you that he is only setting him free because he will be blessed by Allah for such an act? You say that he is handsome and well proportioned, and you speak the truth. But the Sheik's son—may the Prophet restore him to his father's house—the Sheik's son was a still more handsome boy; he must be full grown now, and well proportioned too. Shall he, then, spare money and sacrifice a cheap and deformed slave, in the hope that he may receive his son back again? Whoever wishes to do something in this world had better do it well or not do it at all!"

"And look! the Sheik's eyes are always fastened on this slave. I have noticed it the whole evening. While the stories were being told his glance often wandered thither, and rested on the noble features of the freed man. It must, nevertheless, cause him some pain to release him."

"Do not think such things of this man! Do you imagine a thousand tomans would pain him who receives every day three times as many?" said the old man. "But if his glance rests with sorrow on that youth it is because he must be thinking of his son, who is pining away in a foreign land, and he must also be wondering whether it be possible that some soft-hearted man lives there, who would buy his freedom and send him back to his father."

"You may be right," returned the young merchant. "And I am ashamed of myself for always attributing the lowest and most ignoble motives to people, while some beautiful idea ever underlies your thoughts. And yet, as a rule, men are bad. Have you not discovered that, honoured sir?"

"It is just because I have not discovered that, that it gives me pleasure to think well of mankind," he answered. "I went through exactly the same phase as you. I lived so thoughtlessly, heard so much that was bad about men, and was bound, in my own experience, to see so much of the dark side of life, that I began to think that men were a thoroughly good-for-nothing race. Then it occurred to me that Allah, who is as just as He is wise, would not suffer such a degraded race to inhabit this beautiful earth. I thought over what I had seen and experienced, and, behold! I had only taken what was bad into my calculations, and forgotten the good. I had not even noticed when someone performed an act of mercy; I had taken it quite as a matter of course that whole families should lead a life of virtue and justice. But whenever I had heard of anything bad and wicked I had stored it in my memory. Then I began to look round me with quite another pair of eyes. I was glad when I saw

that goodness was not so rare as I had at first thought ; I did not notice the bad side of things so much, or rather, it struck me less, and thus I learned to love people, and find much that was good in them ; and in all those many years I have more often been mistaken in thinking them stingy or vulgar or irreligious than in saying something nice about them."

As he was saying these words the old man was interrupted by the overseer of the slaves, who approached him, and said : " Sir, the Sheik of Alexandria, Ali Banu, has been well pleased to remark your presence in his room, and invites you to approach him, and to sit near him."

The young people were not a little astonished that the old man, whom they had held to be a beggar, should be so highly honoured, and when he had departed to sit near the Sheik they detained the overseer of the slaves, and the scribe said to him : " I adjure you, by the Prophet's beard, tell us who is this old man with whom we have been talking and whom the Sheik honours in this way."

" What ! " cried the overseer of the slaves, throwing up his hands in astonishment. " You do not know this man ? "

" No ; we do not know who he is."

" But I have seen you several times speaking to him in the street, and my lord the Sheik has also noticed it, and last time he said : ' Those must be the right sort of young men if that man deigns to enter into conversation with them.' "

" But do tell us, then, who he is ! " cried the young merchant in great impatience.

" No ; you are trying to make a fool of me," answered the overseer of the slaves. " No one enters this room

unless he has been expressly invited, and to-day the old man sent a message to the Sheik to ask if he might bring a few young men with him, if it would not be inconvenient, and Ali Banu sent to tell him that he had only to command in the Sheik's house."

"Do not leave us longer in this uncertainty. As sure as I live I do not know who this man is ; we made his acquaintance quite by chance, and have sometimes conversed with him."

"Well, then, you must consider yourselves in great luck, for you have talked with a learned and famous man, and everyone here honours and admires you for it: it is no one but Mustapha, the learned dervish."

"Mustapha! The wise Mustapha, who educated the Sheik's son, and has written many learned books, and travelled far in every part of the world? Is it with Mustapha that we have been talking—and talking quite as if he were one of us, without any respect?"

The young men were still talking about the fairy stories and about the old man, the dervish Mustapha. They felt highly honoured that so old and famous a man had vouchsafed to notice them, and that they had even talked and argued with him many a time. Then the overseer of the slaves came up to them suddenly, and invited them to follow him to the Sheik, who wished to speak with them. The young fellows went with beating hearts. They had never yet spoken to such a distinguished man, not even alone, much less before so large a company. But they pulled themselves together, so as not to appear like fools, and followed the overseer of the slaves to the Sheik. Ali Banu reclined on a sumptuous divan, drinking sherbet. The old man sat on his right ; his shabby robe covered magnificent cushions, his worn sandals rested on a rich

carpet of Persian manufacture, but his fine head, and his eyes shining with noble and wise thoughts, showed that he was worthy to sit near a man like the Sheik.

The Sheik looked grave, and the old man seemed to be speaking words of consolation and encouragement. The young men guessed that they had been summoned into the Sheik's presence in order that the sorrowing father might find diversion for his thoughts in talking to them.

"Welcome, young men," said the Sheik; "welcome to the house of Ali Banu. My old friend deserves my thanks for bringing you here, but still I am annoyed with him for not having sooner made me acquainted with you. Which of you is the young scribe?"

"I, O my lord, at your service!" said the young scribe, crossing his arms on his breast, and bowing low.

"You are very fond of hearing stories, then, and of reading books with beautiful verses and maxims?"

The young man blushed, and answered: "O my lord, it is true that for my part I know no pleasanter occupation than to spend the day like that. It cultivates the intellect, and passes the time. But each man for himself; I, of course, do not blame anyone who does not——"

"That's good, that's good," interrupted the Sheik, laughing, and signed to the second man to approach. "Who are you then?" he asked.

"Lord, I am by profession a doctor's apprentice, and have already cured one or two sick people."

"Right," replied the Sheik. "And it is you, is it not, who loves good living; you like to have a meal now and then in good company, and to enjoy good cheer? Haven't I guessed right?"

The young man was ashamed; he felt that he had

been betrayed and that the old man must have told tales of him. However, he put a bold face on the matter, and answered : " Oh yes, lord ; I count it part of the happiness of life to be able now and then to make merry with some friends. My purse, it is true, does not allow me to do more than regale my friends with water-melons and inexpensive things of that kind, yet we manage to be very merry on that, and should be still more so, you can imagine, if I had more money."

The Sheik was pleased with this plucky answer, and could not help laughing at it. " Which is the young merchant ? " he further inquired.

The young merchant bowed gracefully to the Sheik, for he was a well-bred fellow, and the Sheik said : " And you ? You enjoy music and dancing ? It gives you pleasure to hear good artists play and sing, and you enjoy seeing dancers perform intricate dances ? "

The young merchant answered : " I see, my lord, that that old man, in order to amuse you, has told tales about all our weak points. If he has succeeded in cheering you I am much pleased to have contributed to your amusement. But as for music and dancing, I own that there is very little else which gives me so much pleasure. Yet you must not think, O my lord, that for this reason I should blame you if you do not likewise——"

" Enough, no more ! " cried the Sheik, holding up his hand, with a smile. " Each man for himself, you were going to say. But there is still another one ; can that be he who loves travelling so much ? Who, then, are you, young gentleman ? "

" I am a painter, O my lord," answered the young man ; " I paint landscapes, sometimes on the walls of rooms, sometimes on canvas. It certainly is my

great wish to see foreign countries, for in travelling I could visit all sorts of beautiful places, which I could afterwards reproduce; and if I see something, and make a sketch of it, it is generally more beautiful than any creation of my own brain."

The Sheik gazed on these fine young fellows, and his face became grave and overclouded. "I too had once a dear son," he said, "and he must be as tall as any of you now. You should have been his companions and attendants, and all your wishes would have been readily granted you. He could have read with this man, and listened to music with that man; with you he could have entertained his friends, made merry with them, and enjoyed good cheer; and I should have made him visit beautiful places with the painter, and should have been sure that he would always come back to me. This, however, was not Allah's wish, and I will submit to His will without complaint. Nevertheless, it is still in my power to fulfil your wishes, and you shall leave Ali Banu with joyful hearts. You, my learned friend," he continued, turning to the scribe, "shall henceforth live in my house, and be set over my books. You can add whatever books you like to the collection, whatever you think good, and your only work will be to tell me about anything specially beautiful which you may happen to read. You, who love a good meal with your friends, shall be the overseer of my amusements. It is true that I live a lonely and cheerless existence, but my duty and my office exact that I should every now and then entertain many guests. You shall, therefore, look after all this for me, and can, further, invite such friends of your own as you may wish to have; they must be regaled, that goes without saying, with some-

thing better than water-melons ! I must certainly not deprive that young merchant there of his business, which brings him money and honour ; but every evening, my young friend, dancers, singers, and musicians shall be at your disposal for as long as you like ; you can be played to and danced to according to your heart's desire. And you," he said to the painter, " you shall visit foreign lands, and delight your eyes with new sights. My treasurer shall hand over to you a thousand gold pieces, as well as two horses and a slave, for your first journey, on which you can embark tomorrow. Go wherever the spirit moves you, and when you see anything beautiful paint it for me."

The young people were quite beyond themselves with astonishment, and speechless with joy and gratitude. They wanted to kiss the floor at the foot of this kind benefactor, but he restrained them. " If you have anyone to thank," he said, " it is this wise man here, who told me about you. And in doing this he has also given me great pleasure by enabling me to become acquainted with four cheerful young people like you."

But the dervish Mustapha disclaimed all thanks. " You see," he said, " how one should never form a hasty judgment. Have I said too much about this noble man ? "

" Let us hear a story from just one more of the slaves who have been released to-day," interrupted Ali Banu, and the youths returned to their places.

The young slave who had attracted everyone's attention by his height, his beauty, and his fearless glance now stood up, and, bowing to the Sheik, began to speak in a full, clear voice :

THE STORY OF ALMANSOR.

O MY LORD, the men who have spoken before me have told many and wonderful stories which they have heard in foreign lands ; I must own with shame that I know no single story which is worthy of your attention. But, if it does not weary you, I will tell you about the extraordinary fate of one of my friends.

On the Algerian corsair ship from which your merciful hand rescued me was a young man of my age who did not appear to have been born to the slave's dress which he was wearing. The rest of the unfortunate people in the ship were either rough fellows with whom I should not care to live or people whose language was unknown to me ; therefore I was glad to seek the young man's company when we had a little time to ourselves. He was called Almansor, and from his accent I took him to be an Egyptian. We spent some very pleasant times together, and we happened one day to tell each other the story of our lives, of which my friend's was far more remarkable than mine.

Almansor's father was a man of position in an Egyptian town, which he did not name. He spent a happy and contented childhood, surrounded by every comfort and great magnificence. But for all that he was not brought up in a delicate manner, and his mind was cultivated from his earliest years ; for his father was a wise man, and taught him to lead a virtuous life, and besides this, he had for his master a sage of great repute, who instructed him in everything which it behoves a young man to know. Almansor was about ten years old when the Franks sailed over the sea and declared war against his people.

The boy's father could not have regarded the Franks with great favour, for one day, as he was about to sally forth to his morning prayer, they came, and demanded first his wife, in compensation for his loyal opposition, and then, as he would not give her up, they dragged away his son by force into their camp.

As the young slave reached this point in his story the Sheik covered his face, and a murmur of indignation arose in the room.

"What!" cried the Sheik's friends. "How can that young man behave so foolishly, and reopen Ali Banu's wounds by such stories instead of alleviating them; how can he renew his pain instead of dispelling it?" Even the overseer of the slaves was furious with the shameless youth, and ordered him to be silent. The young slave was astonished at this, and asked the Sheik whether there was anything in his story which had aroused his displeasure. The Sheik rose at these words, and said:

"Do not be uneasy, my friends; how can this youth know anything about my sad fate when he has hardly been three days under this roof? Is it not possible that, among all the horrors perpetrated by these Franks, someone may have met with a like fate to mine; is it not even possible that this Almansor?—but continue your story, my young friend!" The young slave bowed, and continued.

Young Almansor was, therefore, led away to the Frankish camp. He fared well there on the whole, for one of the chiefs made him come into his tent, where he was amused at the boy's answers, which were interpreted to him by a dragoman. He looked after

him, and saw that he did not lack anything in the way of food and raiment, but his longing for his parents made the boy very unhappy. He wept for many days, but these men were not moved by his tears. When they broke up camp, Almansor thought he would be allowed to return home, but this was not the case. The army moved from one place to another, and waged war with the Mamelukes, and young Almansor was always dragged about with them. If he besought the captains or generals to allow him to return home, he always met with a refusal, and was told that he must be the security for his father's loyalty. And thus he spent many days on the march.

All at once, however, a stir arose in the camp which did not escape the boy's notice—people spoke of packing up, of retreat, of embarkation—and Almansor was beyond himself with joy, for now, if the Franks withdrew to their own land, he would surely be set free. They withdrew, with all their baggage, towards the coast, and finally had travelled so far that they saw the ships at anchor lying before their eyes. The soldiers embarked, but only a small section were on board when night fell. Although Almansor wished to stay awake, because he thought every hour that he would be released, he fell, nevertheless, into a deep sleep, and believed that the Franks must have drugged his water in order to make him drowsy. For when he woke up, broad daylight was shining into a little chamber, which was not where he had been when he fell asleep. He sprang off his couch, but directly he touched the floor he fell down, for the floor was swaying up and down, and everything seemed in motion, and appeared to be swimming round him in a circle. He picked himself up, and clung tightly to the wall,

in order to get out of the room in which he found himself.

There was an extraordinary roaring and hissing all round him ; he did not know whether he was dreaming or waking, for he had never heard or seen anything like this. At last he reached a few steps, which he mounted with difficulty—and what horrors were revealed to him ! All around was nothing but sky and sea. He was in a ship ! Then he began to weep in a pitiful manner. He wanted to be taken back ; he wanted to throw himself into the sea, and swim across to his native land. But the Franks held him fast, and one of their commanders sent for him, and told him that, if he were obedient, he should soon return to his own country, and explained to him that it had not been possible to send him home from the coast, for had he been left there he would certainly have met with a miserable death.

But the Franks did not keep their word, for the ship sailed on for many days, and when they eventually landed it was not on the coast of Egypt but in their own country. During the long voyage, and before that in the camp, Almansor had learnt to understand and speak a little of the Frankish tongue, which stood him in good stead in this land where no one knew his language. For many days he was led through the inmost part of the country, and everywhere the people came together in crowds to see him, for those who were with him proclaimed that he was the son of the King of Egypt, who had sent him to complete his education in Frankish dominions.

The soldiers only said this in order to make the people believe that they had conquered Egypt, and that peace was firmly established with that land.

When the journey by land had lasted many days they arrived at a big town, which was the goal of their journey. There he was handed over to a doctor, who took him into his house, and instructed him in all the local habits and customs.

First of all, he had to put on Frankish clothes, which were very narrow and tight, and not half so beautiful as his Egyptian garments. Then he had to give up bowing with crossed arms, and if he wished to salute anyone he had to take off with one hand the enormous black felt cap which was worn by all the men, while he placed his other hand on his hip, and pawed the ground with his right foot. Neither was he allowed to sit cross-legged any longer, after the pleasant custom of the East, but had to perch himself upon a high-legged chair, and let his legs hang down to the floor. Eating was also a matter of no little difficulty, for everything which he wished to convey to his mouth had first to be stuck on to an iron fork.

The doctor was a severe and bad-tempered man, and worried the boy, for if he sometimes forgot himself, and said : "Salem aleicum" to a visitor, his master beat him with a stick, for he should have said : "Votre serviteur." Nor was he allowed to think or speak or write in the Egyptian tongue ; the most he might do was to dream in it, and possibly he would have entirely forgotten his own language, if there had not lived in that town a man who proved of the greatest service to him.

This was an old but very learned man, who understood many Eastern languages—the Arabian, Persian, and Coptic tongues, and even Chinese—a little of each ; he was considered a marvel of wisdom in the country, and was paid large sums for teaching these languages

to young people. This man made young Almansor come to him a few times every week, and regaled him with rare fruits and such-like things, and the youth then felt as if he were at home, for the old gentleman was a most singular man. He had clothes made for Almansor, such as are worn by the people of highest rank in Egypt. He kept them in a special room in his own house. When Almansor arrived, he sent him into this room with a servant, and made him clothe himself entirely according to the fashion of his country. The next move was to "Lesser Arabia," this being the name of a room in the sage's house. This room was adorned with every sort of artificially cultivated tree—palms, bamboos, young cedars, and the like—and with such flowers as are only found in the East. There were Persian carpets on the floor, and divans along the wall, and nowhere was a Frankish chair or table to be seen. The old professor sat on one of these divans; but he looked quite different than usual: he had wound a fine Turkish shawl round his head as a turban, and had tied on a grey beard, which, reaching to his waist, had quite the appearance of the natural and respectable beard of a man of rank. He also wore a robe which he had had made out of a brocade dressing-gown, full Turkish trousers and yellow slippers, and, though he was usually the most peaceable of men, on these days he girded on a Turkish sabre, and had a dagger set with false stones in his belt. To complete the picture he smoked a pipe of some two ells in length, and was served by his household also in Persian garb, the half of them having their hands blacked.

At first young Almansor thought this an extraordinary business, but soon he realised that, if he fell in with the old man's ideas, these lessons might prove

very useful to him. If no Egyptian words were allowed in the doctor's house here it was the Frankish speech which was forbidden. At his entrance Almansor had to pronounce the Greeting of Peace, and the old Persian answered in the most solemn manner; then he made a sign to the youth to sit near him, and began to speak Persian, Arabian, Coptic, and every sort of language all mixed up together: this was what he called a learned Eastern conversation. A servant, or rather a slave, for that was what he represented on these days, stood beside him holding a large book; this book was a dictionary, and if a word had escaped the old man he made a sign to the slave, who quickly looked up what he wanted to say, and the conversation continued.

The slaves brought sherbet and such-like things in Turkish vessels, and if Almansor really wanted to please the old man, he told him that everything was arranged as it was in the East. Almansor read Persian beautifully, and that was his great claim to favour in the old man's eyes. He had a number of Persian manuscripts, from which he made the youth read portions aloud, and then repeated them carefully after him, and in this manner committed the correct accent to memory.

Those were Almansor's red-letter days, for he was never dismissed without a present, and he often departed with most costly gifts of money and fine linen, not to mention other necessary things which the doctor refused to give him. Thus he lived for a few years in the capital of the Frankish land, and never had he found the separation from his home easier to bear. But when he was fifteen years old an incident occurred which greatly influenced his future.

The Franks had elected their commander-in-chief, with whom Almansor had so often conversed in Egypt, to be their king and ruler. Almansor was sure, from the general appearance of festivity in the town, that something of the kind was happening, but he could not believe that the king could be the same man as he whom he had seen in Egypt, for that commander had been a very young man. One day, however, Almansor was crossing one of the bridges over the broad river which flows through the town, when he became aware of a man, in the simple dress of a common soldier, leaning against the parapet of the bridge, and gazing down into the water. The man's face struck him, and he remembered that he had seen him before. He quickly searched the storehouses of his mind, and, being carried back by his memory into Egypt, it suddenly dawned upon him that this man was that same Frankish general, to whom he had often spoken in the camp, and who had so kindly concerned himself about his welfare. He could not quite remember his name, so he plucked up courage, and, approaching him, addressed him by the name which the soldiers used when speaking to one another, and crossed his arms on his breast after the fashion of his country, saying: "Salem aleicum, Petit Caporal!"

The man looked round in astonishment, glanced sharply at the youth, seemed to rack his brains a moment, and then said: "Heavens! is it possible? You here, Almansor? What has become of your father? How are they getting on in Egypt? What brought you here?"

Then Almansor could no longer restrain himself; he began to weep bitterly, and said to the man: "You do not know, then, what those dogs, your countrymen,

have done to me, Petit Caporal? You do not know, then, that I have not seen the land of my fathers for many years?"

"I cannot believe," said the man, and a cloud crossed his brow, "I cannot believe that you were kidnapped."

"Ah, it is too true," answered Almansor; "on that day on which your soldiers embarked, I saw my native land for the last time. They took me away with them, and a captain, who was moved by my misery, pays for my board at the house of a cursed doctor, who beats me and almost starves me. But listen, Petit Caporal," he continued frankly, "it is a good thing that I met you here; you must help me."

The man to whom he said this, smiled a little, and asked in which way he could help him.

"Listen!" said Almansor. "It would be unfair were I to ask a favour of you—you have always been so kind to me—but I know that you too are a poor man, for even when you were in command you were never very sumptuously dressed like the others, and now, to judge from your hat and coat, you cannot be in very prosperous circumstances. But the Franks have lately elected a sultan, and, without doubt, you know people who could approach him—either his Janizary, or the Reis Effendi, or the Kapudan-pasha—don't you?"

"Well, yes," replied the man; "but what next?"

"You might put in a good word for me to these people, Petit Caporal, so that they might be moved to beg the Sultan of the Franks to release me. Then I shall also need some money for the voyage across the sea, but, first of all, you must promise me not to repeat a word of this either to the doctor or to the Arab professor?"

"Who is this Arab professor?"

"Oh, he is a curious man ; but I will tell you about him another day. If either of them heard about this, I should never be allowed to leave Frankish territory. But will you speak to the Agas for me ? Tell me frankly."

"Come with me," said the man ; "perhaps I can be of use to you at once."

"At once ?" cried the youth with horror. "On no account could I come at once ; the doctor would be sure to flog me ; I must make haste to get home now."

"What are you carrying in that basket ?" asked the other, detaining him. Almansor blushed, and would not at first tell him ; at last he said : "Look here, Petit Caporal, I have to serve here as if I were the meanest of the slaves in my father's house. The doctor is a stingy man, and every day he sends me an hour's walk from our house to the vegetable and fish market, and there I have to bargain with the dirty market-women, just to get things a few pence cheaper than in our quarter of the town. Look ! Just for this bad herring, this handful of salad, and this tiny piece of butter, I have to walk two hours every day. Ah, if my father only knew !"

The man to whom Almansor said this, was moved by the boy's misery, and answered : "Only come with me, and you shall find comfort ; the doctor shall have nothing to reproach you with if he has neither herring nor salad for his dinner. Cheer up, and come with me."

With these words he took Almansor by the hand, and, although the heart of the latter misgave him when he thought of the doctor, there was such confidence in the words and in the whole appearance of the man that the lad determined to follow him.

He walked, therefore, with his basket on his arm, through many streets at the soldier's side, and it struck him as very extraordinary, that all the people took off their hats to him, and stood still, looking back at him. He said as much to his companion, who merely laughed, and made no remark about it.

At length they arrived at a magnificent castle, and the man went straight up to the door. "Do you live here, Petit Caporal?" asked Almansor.

"This is where I live," answered the other; "and I am going to take you to my wife."

"Well, you are well off here!" continued Almansor. "I suppose the Sultan has given you free quarters here?"

"Yes; you are right; I get these quarters from the Emperor," answered his companion, and led him into the castle. There they mounted a broad flight of steps, and entered a beautiful hall, where he told the boy to deposit his basket, and then led him into a magnificent chamber, where his wife was sitting on a divan. The man spoke to her in an unknown language, and they both laughed a good deal; and the woman then asked Almansor, in the Frankish tongue, many questions about Egypt. At last the Petit Caporal said to the lad: "Do you know what will be best? I will take you myself to the Emperor now, and plead with him for you."

Almansor was much alarmed, but he thought of his misery and then of his home. "Allah," he said to them both, "Allah gives great courage to those who are in trouble, and He will not forsake a poor boy like me. I will do it; I will go to him. But tell me, Caporal, must I prostrate myself before him; must I touch the ground with my forehead? What must I do?"

Both of them laughed once more, and assured him that this was not necessary.

“Does he look very awesome and majestic?” he asked again. “Has he got a long beard? Do his eyes flash? Tell me, what does he look like?”

His companion again laughed, and said: “I would rather not describe him to you, Almansor; you yourself shall guess which one he is. I will only give you this one clue: everyone who is in the Emperor’s presence will respectfully take off his hat; he who keeps his hat on his head is the Emperor.” With these words he took him by the hand, and went with him to the Emperor’s audience chamber. The nearer they came the louder did his heart beat, and his knees began to tremble as he approached the door. A servant opened the door, and there, in a semicircle, stood at least thirty men, all magnificently dressed, and covered with gold and stars, such as it is the custom in Frankish lands for the king’s chief agas and bassas to wear; and Almansor thought his companion, who was dressed in such an unostentatious manner, must be the least among these people. They had now all uncovered their heads, and Almansor began to look for him with his hat on his head, for he would be the Emperor. But his search was in vain. All held their hats in their hands, so the Emperor could not be amongst them; then his glance fell casually on his companion, and, behold! he had his hat on his head!

The lad was astonished and perplexed. He gave his companion one long look, and then said, taking off his hat: “Salem aleicum, Petit Caporal. As far as I know I am not myself the Sultan of the Franks, so that it would not become me to keep my head covered;

yet you are the one who keeps his hat on. Petit Caporal, are you, then, the Emperor ? ”

“ You have guessed right,” answered the other ; “ and, more than that, I am your friend. Do not attribute your misfortune to me, but to an unlucky confusion of circumstances, and be assured that you shall sail back to your native land by the first ship. Now go in once more to my wife, and tell her what you know of the Arab professor. I will send the herrings and the salad to the doctor, but for the remainder of your sojourn you shall stay in my palace.”

Thus spake the man who was Emperor ; and Almansor fell down before him, kissed his hand, and begged to be forgiven for not having recognised him ; certainly he had not realised that he was the Emperor.

“ You are right,” returned the other, laughing ; “ when one has only been Emperor for a few days one cannot expect it to be inscribed on one’s forehead.” With these words he made him a sign to retire.

From that day Almansor lived very happily. He was obliged once or twice to visit the Arab professor, about whom he had told the Emperor, but he saw no more of the old doctor. After a few weeks the Emperor sent for him, and told him that a ship was lying at anchor in which he intended sending him back to Egypt. Almansor was beyond himself with joy ; a few days sufficed to equip him for his journey, and with a heart full of gratitude, and loaded with treasures and gifts, he left the Emperor, and travelled to the sea, where he embarked.

But Allah wished to test him still further, and to prove his courage by yet more misfortunes, and he was not yet to be allowed to revisit his native shores. Another Frankish people, the English, were at that

time waging war with the Emperor at sea. They seized all the ships of which they could obtain possession, and thus it came about that, on the sixth day of the journey, the vessel in which Almansor had embarked was surrounded by English ships, and attacked. She was obliged to surrender, and the whole crew was transferred to a smaller ship which was sailing with the others. But there is no more safety at sea than there is in the desert, where brigands fall upon the caravans without any warning, and kill and plunder. A corsair from Tunis surprised the little ship, which had got separated from the rest of the fleet in a storm. She was taken, and her crew were carried off to Algiers, and sold.

Almansor, indeed, was not subjected to such cruel slavery as were his Christian companions, because he was a faithful Mussulman, but, nevertheless, all hope of seeing his home and his father once more was at an end. He lived there five years with a rich man, and had to water his flowers, and cultivate his garden. Then the rich man died without any immediate heirs; his possessions were seized, and his slaves divided, and Almansor fell into the hands of a slave-dealer. The latter had just equipped a ship, in order to sell his slaves for a higher price in foreign parts. It happened by chance, that I also was a slave in the possession of this trader, and was removed to the same ship in which Almansor now found himself. There we learnt to know one another, and it was there he told me his curious story. Then, when we landed, I witnessed a most wonderful dispensation of Providence. It was the shores of his native land which our feet touched as we left the boat; it was the market in his father's town where we were offered for sale; and, my lord, to

put it in two words, it was his own dear father who bought him !

This story had thrown the Sheik Ali Banu into a state of profound thought. It had involuntarily carried him away : his chest heaved, his eyes glowed, and once or twice he seemed about to interrupt his young slave ; but the end of the story did not seem to satisfy him.

“ He might be about one and twenty now, you think ? ” was his first question.

“ Lord, he is just my age, between one and two and twenty.”

“ And what was the name of his native town ? You did not tell us ! ”

“ If I remember rightly, it was Alexandria.”

“ Alexandria ! ” cried the Sheik. “ It is my son ! Where is he staying ? Did you not say Kairam was his name ? Has he dark eyes and brown hair ? ”

“ He has ; and in his moments of confidence he called himself Kairam, and not Almansor.”

“ But, Allah ! Allah ! Oh, tell me : you say his father bought him before your very eyes ; was he sure that it was his father ? Then he is not my son ! ”

The slave answered : “ He said to me : ‘ Allah be praised ! after so many troubles, that is the market-place of my father’s town.’ In a short time a man of high birth came into sight, and he cried : ‘ Oh, what a blessed gift is eyesight ! My eyes once more behold my father’s face ! ’ And the man approached us, examined this one and that one, and eventually bought him who had had all these adventures ; then he lifted up his voice to Heaven in ardent thanksgiving, and

whispered to me : " At last I shall return to happiness ; it is my own father who has bought me."

" Then it is not my son, my Kairam," said the Sheik with deep emotion.

Then the young man could no longer contain himself ; tears of joy filled his eyes, and he threw himself down before the Sheik, saying : " And yet it is your son, Kairam Almansor ; for it is you who have bought him."

" Allah ! Allah ! A miracle ! A great miracle !" cried all those who were present, thrusting themselves forward ; but the Sheik remained speechless, staring at the young man, who raised his handsome face to his. " Friend Mustapha," he said to the old dervish, " a veil of tears hangs before my eyes, and prevents my seeing whether his face bears his mother's features, which those of my Kairam resembled ; approach, and gaze upon him."

The old man approached, and gazed upon him for a long time ; then, laying a hand upon the young man's forehead, he said :

" Kairam, what was the sentence which I committed to your memory on that unhappy day in the Frankish camp ? "

" Dear master," answered the youth, lifting the old man's hand to his lips ; " it runs : He whom Allah loves, and who has a good conscience, is not forsaken in the desert of sorrow, for he has two fellow-travellers who accompany him on his journey."

Then the old man, casting his eyes up to Heaven in thanksgiving, clasped the boy to his heart, and delivered him to the Sheik, saying : " Take him ; as surely as you have mourned for him ten years, so surely is he your son Kairam."

The Sheik was beyond himself with joy and delight ; he gazed again and again on his son's features, and he found there, without doubt, the picture of the boy whom he had lost. And all those present shared in his joy, for they loved the Sheik, and each one felt as if he had been given a son that day.

And now the hall once more rang with song and jubilation, as on the days of joy and happiness. The young man was made to tell his story again in greater detail, and all were loud in their praises of the Arab professor, the Emperor, and any others who had been kind to Kairam. The guests remained until late into the night, and when they dispersed, the Sheik gave each of his friends a valuable gift, by which they might always remember this joyful day.

But he presented the four young men to his son, and invited them to visit him frequently, and it was an understood thing that he should read with the scribe, and travel with the artist, that the merchant should be summoned when there was music or dancing, and that the other should undertake the management of all his amusements. They also were presented with rich gifts, and left the Sheik's house in the best of spirits.

"To whom do we owe all this," they said one to the other, "if not to the old man? Who would have dreamt of this happening when we stood at the door of this house criticising the Sheik?"

"And how easily we might have omitted to pay any attention to the old man's teaching," said another. "Fancy, if we had merely mocked at him! For he certainly looked very shabby and poor, and who would have thought that this was the learned Mustapha?"

"It really is wonderful!" said the scribe. "Was

it not on this very spot that we expressed our wishes out loud? One wanted to travel, the other to sing and dance, the third to keep good company, and I—I longed to read and to hear stories, and are not all our wishes fulfilled? Haven't I got leave to read all the Sheik's books and to add what I like to his collection!"

"And I have authority to manage his table, and to organise the most splendid amusements, and to take part in them myself!"

"And I—as often as I have the slightest desire to hear a song or the sound of stringed instruments, or if I wish to watch dancing, have I not merely to go and demand the services of his slaves?"

"And I," cried the artist—"before to-day I was poor, and could not set foot outside this town, and now I can travel wherever I like!"

"Yes," said they all, "it was, indeed, a good thing that we followed the old man; otherwise, who knows what might have happened to us."

Thus did they speak as they went home in great joy.

THE INN IN THE SPESSART.

MANY years ago, when the roads in the Spessart were still very bad, and not so much frequented as they are now, two young lads were walking through the forest. One of them, a maker of compasses, might have seen some eighteen summers; the other, a goldsmith, could be scarcely sixteen years old, judging by his appearance, and this was evidently his first plunge into the world. The evening was already drawing in, and the narrow path along which they were travelling, was darkened by the shadows of gigantic firs and beeches. The elder of the two tramped boldly onwards, now whistling a song, now chatting with Spry, his dog, and was apparently not at all troubled by the fact that, though the day was drawing to its close, the nearest inn was yet far distant. But Felix, the goldsmith, looked more than once anxiously round. If the wind stirred in the trees, he seemed to hear a sound of steps behind him; if the branches by the wayside were blown apart and swayed to and fro, he thought he saw faces lurking in the brushwood.

The young goldsmith was not usually superstitious, nor wanting in courage. In Wurzburg, where he had been apprenticed, his comrades had considered him a fearless youth, with plenty of backbone, but to-day something had strangely shaken his nerve. He had been told so many things about the Spessart. It was

said that a large band of brigands earned a dishonest livelihood there, that many travellers had been robbed in the last few weeks, and there were even rumours of ghastly murders which had been perpetrated there only a short time before. So it was natural that he felt some anxiety for his life, for there were only two of them, and they would not be able to show much resistance to a band of armed robbers. He began to repent that he had been persuaded by the compass-maker to do one more stage of their journey instead of passing the night at the entrance of the forest.

"And if I'm killed to-night, and lose my life, and everything I ever possessed, it will be your fault, my friend," he said, "for you talked me over into coming through this terrible forest."

"Don't be a coward!" answered the other; "a stalwart apprentice ought to fear nothing. And what do you imagine will happen? Do you imagine these good gentlemen, the Spessart brigands, will do us the honour to attack us and kill us? Why should they trouble themselves? Merely for the sake of the Sunday coat I have got in my knapsack or for the dollar I brought for my journey? Why, one has to travel in a coach and four, adorned with gold and silk, for them to think it worth while to kill anyone."

"Stop! Don't you hear something whistling in the forest?" cried Felix anxiously.

"That was the wind whistling through the trees. Just step out a little faster, and we sha'n't be long."

"Oh, it is all very well to joke about being murdered," continued the goldsmith. "They will just ask you what you have about you, and will at any rate take possession of your Sunday coat, and pocket your florin and your thirty kreuzers. But me—they will kill me

straight away, because I have gold and jewellery with me."

"Oh, why should they kill you for that reason? Now, if four or five of them were to rush out from the underwood, with loaded guns, and point them at us, saying in the most courteous manner: 'Well, gentlemen, what have you got about you?' and 'Don't disturb yourselves, we will help you to carry it,' and polite speeches of that kind—well, you wouldn't do anything foolish: you would just open your knapsack, and produce your yellow waistcoat, your blue coat, two shirts, all the necklaces and bracelets and combs, and anything else you happen to have about you, and, laying them out on the ground, you would be grateful to them for preserving your life."

"That is what you think, is it?" replied Felix hotly. "Do you think I am going to give up that jewellery for my lady godmother, the dear countess? I would rather lose my life; I would rather let myself be cut into tiny pieces. Has she not been a mother to me all those years, and provided for my education since I was ten? Did she not pay for my clothes, my lessons, everything? And now that I am about to pay her a visit, and am going to take her some of my own work, which she ordered from my master; now that I could show her in this lovely jewellery what I have learnt, do you think I am going to give that all up, and the yellow waistcoat too, which was a present from her? No; I would rather die than let those wicked men have my godmother's jewellery!"

"Don't be a fool!" cried the other; "if they were to kill you, you would not be able to take the countess her jewellery any the more; therefore it would be better for you to give it up, and keep your life."

Felix did not answer. It was now quite dark, and in the uncertain light of the new moon it was impossible to see more than five paces in front of one. He became more and more uneasy, and kept closer to his companion, uncertain whether to be persuaded by his arguments or not. They had continued their onward course for another hour, when they caught sight of a light in the distance. But the young goldsmith was of the opinion that it might be the abode of robbers, and should be approached with caution; the other, however, informed him that robbers had underground houses or caves, and that this must be the inn described to them by the man who had met them at the beginning of the forest.

It was a long, low house, with a cart standing before the door, and the neighing of horses could be heard from the stables near by. The compass-maker made a sign to his companion to approach one of the windows, of which the shutters had not been closed. If they stood on their toes they could see right into the room. A man was sleeping in an arm-chair by the fire, who seemed from his dress to be a carter, and was most likely the owner of the waggon at the door. On the other side of the fire sat a woman and a girl, spinning. Behind the table, and sitting against the wall, was a man with a glass of wine in front of him, but his head was supported on his hand, so that his face could not be seen. The elder of the two lads, however, declared from his clothes that he was a man of high birth.

As they were standing at their peephole, a dog began to bark. Spry, the compass-maker's dog, answered, and a maid appeared at the door, and peered out at the strangers.

They were promised an evening meal, and a couple

of beds, so they entered, laid down their heavy bundles, hats, and sticks in the corner, and sat down opposite the gentleman at the table. The latter raised his head at their salutation, and they beheld a fine young man, who thanked them in the most friendly manner for their greeting.

"You are out late on the road," he said; "were you not afraid to travel through the Spessart on such a dark night? I, for my part, preferred putting up my horse in this tavern to riding even an hour farther."

"Well, you were quite right, sir," answered the compass-maker. "The sound of a horse's hoof is music in the ears of such people as haunt these woods, and attracts them from miles away, but when a couple of poor fellows like us slink through the forest, to whom it would be more suitable for the robbers themselves to give an alms, they don't stir hand or foot."

"That is quite true," said the carter, who had awakened at the arrival of the two strangers, and had advanced nearer to the table; "they can't get much in the way of money out of a poor man. But one has heard cases of even beggars being killed, out of sheer thirst for blood, or forced to enlist in the band and become robbers."

"Well, if that is the way these people go on," remarked the young goldsmith, "this house even will afford us little protection. There are only four of us, five with the horseboy; if they took it into their heads to attack us with a force of ten, what resistance could we offer? And besides," he added in a whisper, "who can guarantee that the innkeeper and his wife are honest people?"

"There is no danger in that direction," answered

the carter ; " I have known this inn for more than ten years, and have never found a trace of anything shady. The husband is not often at home—they say he is in the wine trade—but the wife is a quiet woman who bears no one any malice. No ; you are wronging these good people, sir ! "

" And yet," said the young gentleman of distinction, " I should not like to deny flatly what he says. Do you not remember the rumour about those people who all at once disappeared completely in this forest ? Some of them had announced their intention of spending the night in this inn, and when nothing was heard of them for two or three weeks, a party was sent in search of them, and inquiries were made here, but no one had been seen ; that certainly looks suspicious."

" God knows," cried the compass-maker, " we should certainly have more sense if we camped out for the night under the nearest and largest tree, instead of staying within these four walls, from which there can be no escape, once the doors are guarded, for the windows are barred."

This conversation made them all thoughtful. It did not seem improbable that this tavern, either voluntarily, or because it had been forced into it, was in secret understanding with the brigands. The night seemed to them, therefore, fraught with danger ; how many tales had they heard of wanderers who had been attacked and murdered in their sleep ; and, even if they ran no risk of losing their lives, the majority of the guests in the inn were people of such limited means, that it would be a very sensible loss to them to be deprived of even half their possessions. They stared sulkily and gloomily into their glasses. The young gentleman was wishing he were trotting through

an open and smiling valley on his horse ; the compass-maker that he had twelve of his sturdiest comrades as a bodyguard, armed with cudgels ; Felix, the goldsmith, had more fear for his benefactress's jewellery than for his own life ; but the carter, after thoughtfully puffing at his pipe for some minutes, said softly : " Gentlemen, at least they shall not surprise us in our sleep. I, for my part, will stay awake the whole night if someone else will stay with me."

" I will, certainly"—" I will too," cried the three others ; " I am sure I couldn't sleep," added the young gentleman.

" Well, we must do something to keep ourselves awake," said the carter ; " I should think, as there are four of us, we might play cards ; that would keep us awake, and pass the time."

" I never play cards," answered the young gentleman ; " so I'm afraid I can't join you."

" And I know nothing about it," added Felix.

" What can we do, then, if we don't play ?" said the compass-maker. " Shall we sing ? No ; that would not do, it would only attract the robbers. Shall we give one another riddles and catches to guess ? That would not last long, though. I tell you what : how would it be if we were to tell each other stories ? Whether they be amusing or serious, true or imagined, they would, anyhow, serve to keep us awake as well as playing cards."

" I am quite agreeable if you will begin," said the young gentleman, smiling. " You gentlemen who are in trade find your way to all sorts of countries, and must have something ready to tell ; every town has its own legends and stories."

" Yes, yes ; one hears many things," replied the

compass-maker—"that is why gentlemen like you study so deeply in books where such wonderful things are to be found, so you should have more beautiful and clever stories to tell, than simple artisans such as we are. I must be greatly mistaken if you are not a student and a man of learning."

"No; not a man of learning," said the young gentleman, with a smile, "though I am a student, and I intend going home in the vacation. But what we find in our books, is really much less suitable material for stories, than what you pick up in your travels. Therefore do begin if these others are willing to listen."

"I enjoy hearing a good story," declared the carter, "even better than playing a game of cards. I often drive along the high road at a snail's pace for the sake of listening to someone walking alongside who is telling a good story. Many a time in bad weather have I given someone a lift in my cart, on the condition that he should tell me a story, and I verily believe that I only care for one of my friends, because he knows some stories which take seven hours, and even longer, to tell."

"That is my case too," added the young goldsmith; "I like nothing better than to hear a good story, and my master in Wurzburg was actually obliged to forbid my having books, for fear that I should read too much, and neglect my work. So give us something good, comrade; I am sure you could tell us tales from now till daybreak without exhausting your store."

The compass-maker took a deep draught to give him strength for his recital, and then began:

THE LEGEND OF THE STAG FLORIN.

IN Upper Swabia, even to this day, there exist the ruins of a stronghold, which was once the most important in all that neighbourhood—Hohenzollern. They rise up precipitously out of the steep hillside, and from their rugged heights one can see far and wide over the country. The Zollerns were feared as a bold race throughout, and even beyond, the territory of which their castle formed the chief landmark, and their name was known and honoured in all German lands. Well, several hundred years ago—I think that gunpowder had barely been invented—there lived in this stronghold, a Zollern, who was by nature a most peculiar person. One could not say that he oppressed his subjects particularly, or that he had many feuds with his neighbours, but, nevertheless, no one who ever crossed his path felt they could trust him, on account of his forbidding eyes, frowning brow, and taciturn, sullen manner. There were but few people, beyond his own servants, who had ever heard him give a civil answer, like other men; for if, as he was riding through the valley, someone happened to meet him, and, smartly raising his cap, stopped to wish him good-evening, and to remark that it was a fine day, he would reply: “Nonsense!” or “I know that.” But if someone had done anything wrong to him or his horse, or if he met in the ravine a peasant with a cart which he could not pass quickly enough to please him, he would then vent his fury in a storm of curses; and yet no one had ever heard that on such occasions he had ever struck a peasant. Nevertheless, throughout the whole neighbourhood he was dubbed the “Tempest of Zollern.”

The Tempest of Zollern had a wife who was the very opposite to her husband ; mild and sweet as a day in May. By her friendly words, and gentle glance, she had often reconciled people who had been offended by the rough speech of her spouse ; she did good also to the poor whenever she could, and did not hesitate, in the hottest summer weather, or in the coldest blizzard, to descend the steep hillside on a visit to some poor man or sick child. If she happened to meet the Count on one of these expeditions, he would mutter angrily : “ I know what you’re about—perfect nonsense ! ” and ride on.

Many women would have been horrified or intimidated by this sullen manner ; some might have thought : “ Of what consequence are the poor to me if my lord thinks it is absurd of me to visit them ? ” others, perhaps, from pride or fear, might have lost their love for so morose a husband—but not Lady Hedwig of Zollern. She loved him now, as ever, and tried to smooth the lines from his cloudy brow with her beautiful white hand, and always loved and honoured him. And when, after a long time, Heaven sent them a present of a baby boy, her love towards her husband in no way diminished, although she fulfilled towards her little son all the duties of the most tender mother. Three years passed away, and the Count of Zollern only saw his son every Sunday, after the midday meal, when he was brought down by his nurse. He would look at him steadily for a moment, mutter something under his breath, and give him back to his nurse. But when the boy learnt to say “ Father,” he gave the nurse a florin, though he never became more friendly in his attitude towards the child.

On his third birthday, the Count put the boy into

his first pair of knickerbockers, and dressed him magnificently in silks and satins; he then ordered his black horse and another beautiful steed to be brought to the door, and, taking the little one on his arm, he began to descend the spiral staircase in his clanking spurs. Lady Hedwig was astonished when she saw this. It was not usually her custom to ask whither he was going or when he would be home. But this time, as he was starting, her anxiety for her child unloosed her lips. "Are you going for a ride, my lord?" she said. He did not answer. "Why are you taking the little one with you?" she continued. "Kuno is going for a walk with me."

"I know that," replied the Tempest of Zollern, and walked on; but when he came to the courtyard he took hold of the boy by one little foot, and, lifting him quickly into the saddle, he tied him on securely with a scarf, then, swinging himself on to his own black horse, he trotted out under the castle arch, and took the reins of his son's horse into his hand.

It seemed at first to afford the little boy great satisfaction to be riding down the steep slope with his father. He clapped his hands, and laughed, slapping his horse's mane to make him go faster, and the Count was much pleased, and even exclaimed more than once: "You will turn into a brave fellow!"

But when they reached the plain, and the Count fell from a walk into a trot, the child became frightened. At first he shyly asked his father to ride more slowly, but as he merely increased his pace, and poor Kuno nearly had his breath taken away by the strong wind, he began to cry quietly, and, growing every moment more terrified, he at last screamed with all his might.

"I know what I'm about — what nonsense!"

said his father. "Is this youngster going to howl on his first ride? Be quiet, or——" But at the very moment in which he was about to encourage his son with a curse, his horse reared, and the reins of the other horse slipped from his hands as he struggled to master his own steed. When he had eventually quieted it, and looked round anxiously for his child, he saw the boy's horse trotting riderless towards the castle.

Although the Count of Zollern was, as a rule, a hard and morose man, this sight so smote him that he immediately pictured his son lying mangled in the path. He tore at his beard and groaned aloud. But, retrace his steps as far as he would, no sign of the boy was to be seen; he made up his mind that the shying horse must have flung him into a ditch which ran parallel to the road. At that moment he heard his name called by a child's voice behind him, and as he turned sharply round—behold! there, not far from the road, under a tree, sat an old woman, rocking the little one in her arms.

"How did you get hold of that boy, you old witch?" cried the Count with great fury. "Bring him to me at once."

"Not so fast, not so fast, your grace!" laughed the hideous old woman, "or you may have a fall yourself! How did I come by the babe, did you ask? Why, his horse was running away, and he was only hanging to it, tied by one foot, his hair almost trailing on the ground, when I caught him in my apron."

"I know that!" cried the Lord of Zollern crossly. "Give him to me now; I can't very well dismount, for my horse is fresh, and might kick him."

"Give me a stag florin," replied the woman in a voice of humble petition,

"Nonsense!" cried the Count, and he threw a few halfpence to her under the tree.

"No; it is a stag florin I want," she continued.

"What!—a stag florin! You are not worth a stag florin yourself!" ejaculated the Count. "Quick, here with the child, or I will set the dogs on you."

"Really? So I am not worth a stag florin?" she answered, with a mocking laugh. "Well, we will just see whether your inheritance is worth a stag florin; but there, you can keep your halfpence." As she said this she threw the three little copper pieces to the Count, and so well could the old woman throw that all three fell straight into the little leather purse which the Count was holding in his hand.

For some minutes the Count was struck dumb with astonishment at her skill, but eventually his amazement gave way to fury. He seized his gun, and, cocking it, took aim at the old woman. She, however, continued to cuddle and kiss the little count, holding him in front of her, so that the bullet was bound to pierce him first. "You are a dear, good little chap," she said; "stay like that, and no harm shall come to you." Then she let him go, and, shaking a threatening finger at the Count, she cried: "Zollern, Zollern, you still owe me that stag florin," and, ignoring his abusive epithets, hobbled away into the wood, leaning on her little staff of beech wood. Conrad, the groom, tremblingly dismounted from his horse, lifted his small sire into the saddle, and, swinging himself up behind him, rode up the castle hill after his master.

This was the first and last time that the Tempest of Zollern took his son out for a ride, for he considered him a milksop because he had screamed and cried when the horses began to trot, and thought he should

not be able to make anything of him. He regarded him henceforth with great displeasure, and when the boy, who loved his father with all his heart, came to his side in a coaxing and friendly manner, the man repulsed him, crying: "I know! such nonsense!" Lady Hedwig would cheerfully have borne all her husband's bad temper, but his unkind behaviour to her innocent child wounded her deeply. She often got quite ill from fear when the forbidding Count severely punished his small son for some slight fault, and at last she died, in the prime of life, mourned by her servants and all the neighbourhood, but most bitterly by the young count.

From this time the Count concerned himself less and less about the little fellow; he relinquished his education to the supervision of his nurse and his private chaplain, and did not pay any further attention to him, especially as he soon married again, and took to wife a rich young lady, who in a year's time presented him with twins.

Kuno's favourite walk was to the little old woman who had once saved his life. She always told him stories about his dead mother, and how kind the latter had been to her. The men-servants and maids often warned him that he should not go so often to Mistress Feldheim, as she was called, because she was no other than a witch; but the little fellow was not afraid, for the chaplain of the castle had taught him that there were no such things as witches, and that the legends about certain women who could cast spells, and rode through the air on a broomstick to the Brocken, were without foundation. It is true that when he was with Mistress Feldheim he saw many things which were beyond his comprehension; he still remembered

clearly her trick with the three halfpence, which she had so skilfully thrown into his father's purse, and she also knew how to prepare all sorts of ointments and drugs, with which she healed people as well as cattle; but the report was not true that she had a weather-pan, which, being hung over the fire, brought about a terrible thunder-storm. She taught the little count many useful things; for example, how to cure sick horses, how to prepare a medicine for mad dogs, and make a bait for fishes, and many other useful things. Mistress Feldheim soon became his sole companion, for his nurse died, and his stepmother did not trouble herself about him.

When his brothers gradually grew up, Kuno led an even sadder life than before, for they had the good fortune not to get thrown from their horses on their first ride, and the Tempest of Zollern, therefore, thought them intelligent, capable lads, expended all his affection on them, rode with them every day, and taught them everything at which he himself excelled. In that way they did not learn much that was good—he himself could neither read nor write, and he did not intend that his excellent sons should waste their time over that sort of thing—but even in their tenth year they could swear as terribly as their father, pick a quarrel with everyone, fought one another like cat and dog, and only entered into an alliance and became friends when they wanted to play a trick on Kuno.

Their mother did not worry much about this, for she considered that when young people squabbled, it proved they were strong and healthy; but a servant told the old Count about it one day, and though he replied: "Nonsense! I know all about it," he began

to ponder over some means by which for the future his sons might be prevented from killing one another outright—for he still bore in mind the threat of the old woman, whom, in his heart of hearts, he believed to be a witch: “Well, we shall see whether your inheritance is worth a stag florin.” One day as he was hunting in the neighbourhood of his castle, he caught sight of two peaks which, on account of their shape, seemed an eminently suitable site for castles, and he immediately resolved to build strongholds there as well. He built on one mountain, Roguespeak Castle, named after the smaller of the twins, who had long ago been dubbed “the little rogue” on account of his many malicious tricks. At first he intended calling the other castle which he built “The Peak of the Stag Florin,” in order to show his contempt for the witch because she had not valued his inheritance even at a florin, but eventually he had the name changed to Stagspeak, and both mountains retain these names to this day, and can be pointed out to anyone visiting the Alb.

The Tempest of Zollern had at first the intention to leave Zollern to his eldest son in his will, Roguespeak to the Little Rogue, and Stagspeak to the other twin, but his wife did not rest till this had been altered. “That stupid Kuno,” as she called the poor boy, because he was not so wild and reckless as her sons—“that stupid Kuno is rich enough with what he inherited from his mother; is he to have beautiful, valuable Zollern as well? And are my sons to get nothing but a castle for each, with no property attached except forest land?”

It was in vain that the Count represented to her that, in common justice, they had no right to rob

Kuno of his inheritance ; she wept, and disputed it for so long, that the Tempest of Zollern, who had never given in to anyone, succumbed to her wish, for the sake of peace, and bequeathed Roguespeak to the Little Rogue, Zollern to Wulf, the bigger of the two twin brothers, and Stagspeak, with the little town of Balingen, to Kuno. Soon after he had made this arrangement he fell seriously ill. He said to the doctor who told him he was dying : " I know that ! " and to the chaplain of the castle, who exhorted him to prepare himself for a pious end : " Nonsense ! " and continued to curse and rage until he died, as he had lived—a brutal creature and a great sinner.

His body had not yet been laid to rest, when the Lady Countess appeared with his will, and said mockingly to her stepson Kuno that he could now show off his learning, and read for himself what was written in the will—namely, that he had nothing more to do with Zollern ; then she rejoiced with her sons over the beautiful possessions and the two castles which she had seized from the firstborn.

Kuno submitted without complaint to the will of the deceased man, but he took a tearful farewell of the castle where he had been born, where his good mother was buried, where the chaplain lived, and in whose neighbourhood he had spent so many hours with his old friend, Mistress Feldheim. Stagspeak Castle was certainly a fine and beautiful building, but he felt so lonely and deserted there, and nearly became ill with yearning for Hohenzollern.

The Countess and her twin sons, who were now eighteen years old, were sitting one evening on the terrace looking down the hill towards the valley, and there they saw a splendid knight riding on a horse,

and followed by several pages, and a magnificent litter drawn by two mules. The man, whoever he was, rode for some time hither and thither, and at last the Little Rogue exclaimed : " Why, it is none other than our lord brother of Stagspeak."

" That stupid Kuno ! " said the Lady Countess in astonishment. " Why, he must surely be going to honour us by an invitation to his castle, and has evidently brought that beautiful litter with him to convey me to Stagspeak ; no, I can't say I ever credited my lord son, that stupid Kuno, with so much kindness and good breeding. One civility deserves another ; let us descend to the castle arch to receive him. And do give him a friendly reception ; perhaps he will give us something at Stagspeak, a horse for you, and a set of harness for you, and I have long wished to possess his mother's jewellery."

" I don't want a present from that stupid Kuno," answered Wulf, " nor do I wish to give him a friendly reception. For my part, I think it would be a good thing if he speedily followed our blessed father ; then we should inherit Stagspeak and everything belonging to it, and we would let you have the jewellery, my lady mother, at a cheap rate."

" What, you Turk ! " exclaimed their mother ; " am I to buy the jewellery from you ? Is that your thanks for my having procured Zollern for you ? Little Rogue, I shall have the jewellery for nothing, shall I not ? "

" Death is the only thing one gets for nothing, my lady mother," answered her son, with a laugh ; " and if it is true that the jewellery is of as great value as many a castle, we certainly should not be fools enough to hang it round your neck. As soon as Kuno closes

his eyes we shall ride off, and divide his inheritance, and I shall sell my share of the jewellery. If you will then give more than the Jews, mother, you shall have it."

This conversation had brought them almost as far as the castle arch, and the Lady Countess made an effort to suppress her wrath concerning the jewellery, for at that moment Count Kuno rode across the draw-bridge. When he caught sight of his stepmother and of his brothers, he reined in his horse, dismounted, and gave them a courteous greeting, for although they had caused him much suffering he recollected that they were his brothers, and that his father had loved this malicious woman.

"Well, it is nice to have a visit from my lord son," said the Lady Countess in a sweet voice and with a gracious smile. "How are things going at Stagspeak? Are we getting accustomed to it now? And we have procured ourselves a litter, I see! Well, that is splendid—no empress would be ashamed to use that; the lady of the house will soon be found now to travel round the country in it."

"I have not thought about that yet, most gracious mother," answered Kuno, "and, therefore, I wish to entertain other company in my house, and so have brought the litter here——"

"Well, you are very kind and considerate," interrupted the good lady, bowing and smiling.

"For he no longer finds himself at his ease on a horse," continued Kuno quietly. "Father Joseph, I mean the chaplain; I am going to take him with me, he is my old master, and we arranged that when I left Zollern. I am also going to pick up Mistress Feldheim at the bottom of the hill. My God! she is as

old as the hills now, and once saved my life when I was taking my first ride with my father of blessed memory, so, as I have rooms enough at Stagspeak, she shall end her days there." With these words he crossed the courtyard to fetch the chaplain.

But Wulf bit his lips with rage, the Lady Countess was livid with anger, and the Little Rogue laughed aloud. "What will you give me for that horse he was going to present me with?" he said. "Brother Wulf, will you let me have your harness which he has given you in exchange? Ha! ha! ha! so he is going to have the chaplain and the old witch to live with him! They will be a fine pair; he can learn Greek with the chaplain in the morning, and be instructed by Mistress Feldheim in witches' lore every afternoon! Well, that stupid Kuno is playing tricks!"

"He is a very vulgar creature," answered the Countess, "and you ought not to laugh about it, Little Rogue. It is a disgrace to the whole family, and we shall be put to shame before all the neighbourhood when it is known that the Count of Zollern has fetched the old witch, that Feldheim woman, in a magnificent litter with mules, and has taken her home to live with him. He gets that from his mother; she was always so vulgar in her liking for sick people and the riff-raff of the countryside. Ah, his father would turn in his grave if he knew!"

"Yes," added the Little Rogue; "even in his grave father would say: 'I know that—such nonsense!'"

"There now, here he comes with the old man, and is not ashamed to give him an arm," exclaimed the Countess with horror. "Come along, I will not meet him any more."

They turned away, and Kuno led his old master to

the bridge, and himself helped him into the litter ; at the bottom of the hill he drew up before Mistress Feldheim's hut, and found her quite ready, with a bundle filled with small pots, glasses, drugs, and other apparatus, and her little staff of beech wood in her hand.

This incident did not, however, produce the effect which the Countess, in her malice, had prophesied. No one in the neighbourhood was astonished at Sir Kuno. It was thought a beautiful and praiseworthy thing that he should wish to cheer the last days of old Mistress Feldheim, and he was highly commended as a pious gentleman for receiving Father Joseph into his house. The only ones who hated and slandered him were his brothers and the Countess. But they only did themselves harm, for people were scandalised at such inhuman brothers, and consequently it was rumoured that they did not get on with their mother, but were perpetually quarrelling with her, and also tried in every way to be spiteful to each other. Count Kuno of Zollern made several attempts to be reconciled to his brothers, for it was unbearable to him that they should so often ride past his castle without ever exchanging a word, and that when they met him in the forest or in the field, they should greet him as coldly as if he were an utter stranger. But his overtures failed, and he was scoffed at for his attempts at reconciliation. One day it occurred to him that there was one way by which he might still win their hearts, for he knew them to be stingy and grasping. A pond lay between the three castles, almost exactly in the middle of them, but just situated so as to be within Kuno's dominion. The best pikes and carps in the whole neighbourhood were to be found in this

pond, and it was a source of no little annoyance to the brothers, who loved fishing, that their father had forgotten to bequeath that corner to them. They were too proud to fish there without their brother's knowledge, and yet they would not exchange a friendly word with him in order to gain his permission. He knew, nevertheless, how near that pond lay to their hearts, so one day he invited them to meet him there.

It was a beautiful spring day on which the three brothers, at almost the same moment, came together from their three castles. "Oh, I say," cried the Little Rogue, "we have met well! I started from Roguespeak on the very stroke of seven." "I too"—"And I," answered the brothers of Stagspeak and Zollern. "Well, then, the pond must be exactly in the middle," continued the little fellow; "it is a fine piece of water."

"Yes; that is just why I have summoned you here. I know that you are both very fond of fishing, and though I too enjoy throwing a line now and again there are enough fish in the pond to supply our three tables, and enough room on its banks for us three even if we all came to fish at the same moment. Therefore I wish this pond to be henceforth common property between the three of us, and you shall have quite as much right to it as I."

"Why, our lord brother is most graciously disposed towards us," said the Little Rogue, with a mocking smile, "to bestow on us six acres of water and a few hundred fish! Well—and what must we give in exchange, for you know death is the only thing one gets for nothing?"

"You shall have it for nothing," said Kuno. "Why, I only sent to see you here sometimes, and have a word

with you. We are, after all, the sons of the same father."

"No," replied the Little Rogue; "that would not do at all, for nothing is more fatal than to fish with other people, because one person always frightens away the other's fishes; but if you like to apportion out days—Mondays and Thursdays for you, perhaps, Kuno, Tuesdays and Fridays for Wulf, Wednesdays and Saturdays for me—then I shall be quite agreeable."

"But not I," cried the sullen Wulf, "I will not take a present from anyone, nor will I share anything with anyone. You were right, Kuno, to offer us this fishpond, for we really have all equal right to it, but let us toss for it, to determine who shall possess it for the future; if I happen to have better luck than you you can always ask my leave to fish here."

"I never touch dice," answered Kuno, saddened by his brothers' obstinacy.

"Why, of course," laughed the Little Rogue, "he is much too pious and God-fearing a man, our lord brother, to consider it anything but a heinous crime to play at dice. But I have another suggestion to make, against which even the most pious recluse could have no objection. We will fetch our rods and lines, and whoever has caught the largest number of fish this morning before the clock at Zollern strikes twelve shall have the pond."

"I am really a fool," said Kuno, "to dispute about what belongs to me as my rightful inheritance, but that you may see that I really meant to share it I will fetch my fishing things."

They rode home, each one to his castle. The twins sent out all their servants in great haste, and made

them lift up every old stone to find worms to serve as bait for the fish, but Kuno took an ordinary fishing-rod and some of the bait which Mistress Feldheim had taught him how to prepare, and was the first to reappear at their meeting-place. When the twins arrived he allowed them to choose the best and most comfortable position, and then threw out his line. Immediately it seemed as if the fish recognised him to be the master of the pond. A whole train of pike and carp drew near, and nibbled at his hook. The eldest and biggest ones pushed the little ones away; every minute he drew one out of the water, and when he once more threw out his line twenty, thirty mouths were opened, and snapped at the pointed hook. Two hours had scarcely passed before the ground on every side was covered with the most beautiful fishes. Then he stopped fishing, and went to his brothers to see how they were getting on. The Little Rogue had a tiny carp and two miserable white trout; Wulf had three barbels, and two little groundels, and both were gazing sadly into the pond, for from where they sat they could see the enormous heap which Kuno had caught. When Kuno reached his brother Wulf the latter sprang up in a state of frenzy, tore at the line, broke the rod in pieces, and threw it in the pond. "I wish it were a thousand hooks that I am throwing in instead of only one, for then one of these creatures would be caught on each," he cried. "But by fair means this would never have happened—it is sorcery and witchcraft—otherwise how could you, you stupid Kuno, have caught more fish in an hour than I in a whole year?"

"Yes, yes, now I remember," added the Little Rogue, "Mistress Feldheim, that vile witch, taught

him to fish, and we were fools to compete with him; he will soon become a sorcerer himself."

"You wicked fellows," answered Kuno angrily, "this morning I have had a good opportunity of observing your avarice, shamelessness, and insolence! Go away now, and never come here again, and, believe me, it would be well for your souls if you were half as pious and good as the woman you accuse of being a witch."

"No; she is certainly not a real witch," said the Rogue, with a scornful laugh, "otherwise she would be a soothsayer, and Mistress Feldheim is no more a soothsayer than a goose is a swan. Did she not tell father that the greater part of his inheritance could be bought with a stag florin, which means that he would be utterly ruined, and yet at his death he possessed the whole land as far as can be seen from the battlements at Zollern! Steady, steady! Mistress Feldheim is nothing more than a foolish old woman, and you are the stupid Kuno."

With these words the little fellow hastily turned tail, for he feared his brother's strong arm, and Wulf followed him, ejaculating all the oaths which he had learnt from his father.

Kuno went home in deep distress, for he now realised plainly that his brothers would never come to a reconciliation with him. So much did he take their cruel words to heart that he became very ill the next day, and was only saved from death by the comfort administered by Father Joseph and by the powerful drugs of Mistress Feldheim.

When his brothers heard that he was in a state of serious prostration they organised a merry banquet, and, under the influence of drink, they promised one

another that if Kuno died he who first heard the news was to fire off all his cannons, in order that the other might know what had happened, and that whoever fired first should be allowed to seize the best cask of wine in Kuno's cellar. Wulf stationed from that moment a servant in the neighbourhood of Stagspeak, who was to keep a constant watch, and the Little Rogue bribed one of Kuno's pages with much money, in order that he might inform him post-haste when his master was at the point of death.

But the page was more attached to his gentle and pious master than to the malicious Count of Roguespeak. One day he asked Mistress Feldheim with great concern how his lord was, and when she told him that he was going on very well he disclosed to her the purpose of the two brothers, and how they intended to fire a salute of jubilation at Count Kuno's death. The old woman was very angry at this. She at once repeated it to the Count, and as he refused to believe that his brothers could be so unkind she urged him to put it to the test by spreading abroad a report that he was dead, so that they should hear whether the guns were fired or not. The Count ordered the page whom his brother had bribed to be brought before him, and after questioning him still further he told him to ride to Roguespeak, and report his approaching end.

As the page was riding off with all haste from Stagspeak, Count Wulf's servant caught sight of him, and stopped him to ask him whither he was riding in such a hurry. "Ah," he said, "my poor master cannot live through the night; they have given up all hope."

"What! My watch is at an end then!" he exclaimed, made a rush at his horse, and, swinging himself

into the saddle, galloped to Zollern, and up the castle hill with such speed that his horse fell down before the door, and he himself could only gasp out : "Count Kuno is dying !" and promptly fainted. Then the cannons of Hohenzollern echoed among the mountains, and Count Wulf rejoiced with his mother at the thought of the good cask of wine, the inheritance, the fishpond, the jewellery, and the thundering echoes of his cannons. But what they had thought was an echo proved to be the cannons of Roguespeak, and Wulf said to his mother, with a smile : "So that little man had spies also, and we shall have to divide the wine equally, as well as the rest of the inheritance." Then he mounted his horse, for he suspected that Little Rogue might outstrip him, and perhaps seize some of the most valuable treasures of the deceased before he arrived.

But the two brothers met at the fishpond, and each one blushed at the sight of the other, because each one had hoped to be the first to reach Stagspeak. They did not say a word about Kuno, but as they continued their journey together they discussed future arrangements in a brotherly manner, and debated as to who should possess Stagspeak. As they rode over the drawbridge into the courtyard their brother stood safe and sound at the window, looking out at them. But anger and indignation flashed from his eyes. The brothers were terrified when they saw him, and crossed themselves, thinking it was a ghost, but when they perceived that it was a man of flesh and blood Wulf exclaimed : "Well, I never ! We are in a fix ! I thought you were dead !"

"Well, what is not done to-day may still be done to-morrow," said the little man, looking up at his brother with a venomous expression.

He, however, answered them in a voice of thunder : "From this hour all ties of relationship between us are at an end. I did not fail to hear your cannonade of joy, but notice that I also have five field guns in the courtyard, which have been loaded in your honour. See that you get out of the reach of my cannon balls, or you shall learn how shooting is done at Stagspeak." They did not need to be spoken to twice, for when they looked at him they saw that he was in deadly earnest ; they set spurs to their horses, and raced down the hill, and their brother sent a cannon ball after them, which went whistling over their heads, causing them both simultaneously to make a low and courteous bow ; he only meant, however, to frighten them, and had no intention to wound them.

"Why, in the name of Heaven, did you fire off your guns ?" asked the Little Rogue angrily. "I only fired because I heard you, you fool."

"On the contrary, just ask mother," answered Wulf. "It was you who were the first to fire, and it is you who have brought us into disgrace, you little cur !"

The little man returned tit-for-tat, and by the time they reached the fishpond they had loaded one another with the choicest of the curses inherited from the Tempest of Zollern, and parted in high ill humour and bitter hatred.

The next day Kuno made his will, and Mistress Feldheim said to the good father : "I would wager that that document will not do much good to the sharpshooters." But in spite of her curiosity, and although she often urged her darling to tell her what was in the will, he would not give her any answer, so she never knew, because the following year the good

woman died, and her ointments and drugs could no longer help her—for she did not die from any illness, but because she was in her ninety-eighth year, which is sufficient reason to bring many a strong man down to his grave. Count Kuno had her buried as if she had been his mother instead of merely a poor woman, and after this, his life at the castle grew more and more lonely, for Father Joseph soon followed Mistress Feldheim.

But he was not to suffer long from his solitude ; the good Kuno died in his twenty-eighth year, and malicious people ascribed his death to poison administered by the Little Rogue.

However that may have been, the thunder of cannons was once more heard a few hours after his death, and twenty-five rounds were fired at Zollern and Roguespeak. “He must really be dead this time,” said the Rogue as they met on their way.

“Yes,” answered Wulf ; “and if he rises again from the dead, and abuses us from the window as he did before, I have a gun with me which will silence him, and improve his manners.”

As they were riding up the castle hill they were joined by a rider with a retinue, who were all unknown to them. They thought he was possibly a friend of their brother's who had come to attend his funeral. They, therefore, broke out into loud lamentations, were enthusiastic in their praise of the dead man, bewailed his premature decease, and the Little Rogue even managed to squeeze out some crocodiles' tears. The knight, however, made no answer, but rode in utter silence up the Stagspeak at their side. “There ! Now we can make ourselves at home,” cried Wulf as he dismounted. “Bring out your best

wine, Master Cellarer." They mounted the twisting flight of steps into the hall. Their silent companion followed them into the house, and as the twins sat down to the table with a swaggering air he drew a piece of silver from his doublet, and, throwing it down on the polished table so that it spun round with a ringing sound, said: "There! At last you have got your inheritance; you will find it the correct amount—a stag florin." The two brothers looked at him in amazement, and laughingly asked what he meant.

The knight then produced a document from which hung massive seals, and there the stupid Kuno had made a statement of all the malignant acts with which his brothers had tried to injure him throughout his life, and at the end he had ordered and decreed that his whole inheritance, with his entire property, his mother's jewellery excepted, were to be sold at his death to Wurttemberg—and for the sum of a miserable stag florin! The jewellery, however, was to be used for building almshouses in the town of Balingen.

The amazement of the two brothers increased, but they no longer found it a laughing matter; on the contrary, they ground their teeth together, for they could show no resistance to Wurttemberg, and they had, therefore, lost the whole of this fine property of forests and arable land, the town of Balingen, and even the fishpond, and had inherited nothing but a paltry stag florin. This Wulf thrust sulkily into his doublet, and without a single word, tossed his cap on to his head, then, defiantly pushing himself past the Wurttemberg ambassador, swung himself on to his horse, and rode to Zollern.

The next day, when his mother loaded him with

reproaches for having forfeited both the property and the jewellery, he rode over to the Rogue at Roguespeak, and asked him whether they should gamble with their inheritance or spend it in drink.

"It would be best to spend it in drink," said the Rogue, "then we shall both have scored. We will ride to Balingen, and let ourselves be seen there, in spite of the fact that we have lost the town in the most ignominious manner."

"Yes; and they serve red wine at the 'Lamb' which is as good as any the Emperor would wish to drink," added Wulf.

So they rode to Balingen together, and asked at the "Lamb" what was the price of a measure of red wine, and then pledged one another till they had had their florin's worth. Then Wulf rose to his feet, drew the silver coin with its rampant stag out of the doublet, and, throwing it down on the table, said: "There! There is your florin. That is correct."

But the landlord took the florin, looked him up and down, and then said, with a smile: "Yes, if it were not a florin; but last night a messenger came from Stuttgart, and this morning a proclamation was made in the name of the Count of Wurtemberg, to whom this town now belongs, to the effect that florins are to be no longer recognised as coin of the realm, so you must pay me in different money."

The two brothers turned pale, and looked at one another. "Fork out," said one of them. "Have you no cash?" said the other, and, to put it shortly, they were obliged to remain in the debt of the "Lamb" at Balingen. They set out on their homeward path in thoughtful silence; when they came to the cross-roads where the right-hand turning led to Zollern,

and the left-hand one to Roguespeak, the Rogue said: "Well, what next? We have even inherited less than nothing, and the wine was bad into the bargain."

"That is true," replied his brother; "but what that old Feldheim said has come to pass. Just look how much of his inheritance is left to us for the sake of a florin! We have not even been able to get a measure of wine with it."

"I know that," answered he of Roguespeak.

"Nonsense, isn't it?" said he of Zollern, and rode home to his castle, disgusted with himself and the whole world.

"That is the legend of the stag florin," said the compass-maker in conclusion, "and I believe it to be true. The innkeeper at Dürrwangen, which lies not far from the three castles, told it to a friend of mine who often goes across the Swabian Alb as a guide, but always returns to Dürrwangen."

The guests applauded the compass-maker. "What a lot goes on in the world which one never hears about!" exclaimed the carter. "Well, I really am glad now that we did not waste our time playing cards; we have done much better as it is, and I have been listening most carefully to the story, so as to be able to repeat it to my comrade to-morrow without missing out a word."

"I thought of something while you were telling your story," said the student.

"Oh, tell us, tell us!" pleaded Felix and the compass-maker.

"Very well," he replied; "it doesn't matter to me whether it is my turn now or later; I must, anyhow,

relate what it was I heard. The story which I mean to tell you must actually have happened."

He sat up straight in his chair, and was about to begin his story, when the innkeeper's wife put away her distaff, and approached the guests at the table. "Now, gentlemen, it is time for bed," she said; "it has struck nine, and you have another day before you to-morrow."

"Well, go to bed, then," cried the student; "put out another bottle of wine for us, and we will not keep you up any longer."

"Not at all," she replied crustily; "as long as there are still guests in the parlour the landlady and the servants cannot leave them. In short, gentlemen, be quick, and go to your rooms; I find the time tedious, and no one may sit up in my house beyond nine o'clock."

"What new idea is this, mistress?" said the compass-maker in astonishment. "What harm does it do you, if we choose to sit here, as long as you are sound asleep? We are honest folk, and shall not go off with anything or depart without paying our bill. But I don't suffer people to treat me like this in any inn."

The woman rolled her eyes in fury: "Do you think I am going to change my household arrangements for those rascally apprentices and for that street runner? I tell you for the last time I won't stand a disturbance of this kind."

The compass-maker was about to venture a further reply, but the student gave him a look full of meaning, followed by a wink, which conveyed the rest of his thoughts. "All right," he said; "if Mistress Landlady insists on it let us go to our rooms. But we should like to have lights by which to find the way."

"I cannot supply you with that," she replied crossly.

"The others will be able to find their way in the dark, and this candle-end will suffice for you; I have no more in the house."

The young gentleman took the light in silence, and rose from his seat. The others followed him, and the apprentices took their bundles to put them by their side in their room. They went behind the student, who lighted them up the stairs.

When they reached the top the student begged them in a low voice to tread softly, opened his door, and signed to them to come in. "There is no longer any doubt," he said, "that they mean to betray us; did you not notice how anxiously she tried to get us to bed, and how she deprived us of all means of staying awake and remaining together? She evidently thinks that we shall now lie down, and then she will be able to make short work of us."

"But do you not think we could still get away?" suggested Felix. "It would be more possible to effect an escape in the forest than here in this room."

"The windows are barred here too," exclaimed the student, vainly trying to loosen one of the iron stanchions. "Only one exit remains if we wish to escape—the front door—but I do not think they will let us take our departure."

"Everything depends on the attempt," said the carter; "I will just try to see if I can get out into the yard. If I succeed I will come back and fetch you." The others approved of this suggestion, and the carter took off his shoes, and stole on tiptoe towards the stairs. In the upper room his comrades strained their ears for every sound. He had already got safely half way down the stairs, and was just about

to turn round a corner of the banisters, when an enormous mastiff suddenly sprang up in front of him, and, laying his paws on his shoulder, revealed to him two rows of long and sharp teeth, on a level with his face. He did not dare to step backward or forward, for at the slightest movement the horrible beast snapped at his throat. Then he began to howl and bark, and the houseboy and the landlady appeared at once with lights.

"Where are you going? What do you want?" cried the woman.

"I have still something to get out of my cart," answered the carter, trembling in every limb, for as the door opened he had seen in the room several suspicious-looking men with guns in their hands.

"You might have done all that before," said the landlady sourly. "Get down," she said to the dog. "Shut the yard door, Jacob, and give this man a light to his cart." The dog withdrew his horrible muzzle and paws from the carter's shoulders, and lay down right across the bottom of the stairs. The houseboy locked the yard door, and fetched a light for the carter. Escape was out of the question, but as he was meditating what he should fetch out of his cart he remembered having a pound of wax lights with him, which he was to have conveyed to the nearest town. "That candle-end upstairs can hardly last another quarter of an hour," he said to himself; "but we must have a light somehow!" He, therefore, took two wax candles out of the cart, and, hiding them in his sleeve, he then, for appearance sake, fetched his cloak, which, as he told the houseboy, he wished to use as a covering during the night. He got safely back to the upper room, and told them about the huge dog which kept

watch on the stairs, about the men of whom he had caught a fleeting glimpse, about all the provisions which had been made to prevent their escape, and ended by remarking, with a sigh : " We shall not survive this night."

" There I don't agree with you," replied the student ; " I cannot believe that these people will be such fools as to take the lives of four persons for the sake of the small profits they will reap from us. However, we shall not dare to defend ourselves. I, for my part, shall lose the most ; my horse is already in their hands, and I gave fifty ducats for it four weeks ago ; I will willingly surrender my clothes and my purse also, for, after all, my life is more precious to me than any of these."

" It is all very well for you to talk," answered the carter, " for you can soon replace such things as they will rob you of ; but I am the carrier from Aschaffenburg, and have all sorts of goods in my cart, and two fine horses in the stables, which are my only source of income."

" I can hardly believe," returned the goldsmith, " that they will do you any harm. It would raise such a hue and cry throughout the country if a carrier were robbed. But as regards what we were saying, I shall do as that gentleman suggests, for I would rather relinquish all that I have, and swear on my oath to say nothing about it, and to lodge no complaint against them, than defend my small possessions against people with guns and pistols."

During this conversation the carter had produced the wax candles. He fastened them to the table, and lit them. " Well, for God's sake, let us be on the look out for whatever may happen," he said ; " let

us once more sit down all together, and keep ourselves awake by talking."

"That is what we will do," answered the student, "and as we settled before that my turn had come I will tell you a story."

THE COLD HEART.

PART I.

ANYONE travelling through Swabia should never omit to take a peep at the Black Forest, not only on account of the trees, although such an enormous number of finely-grown firs is not to be found all over the world, but rather on account of the people, who are remarkably different from the rest of their fellow-creatures. They are taller than the ordinary run of mankind, broad-shouldered, with powerful limbs, and it would seem as if the invigorating odour which is wafted in the early morning through the pines, had given them, from their youth up, a freer power of breathing, a clearer eye, and a more stalwart though a rougher disposition than is possessed by the inhabitants of the valleys and plains. And not only in appearance and physique but also in their customs and dress are they quite distinct from the people who live outside the forest. The inhabitants of that part of the Black Forest which belongs to Baden wear the most beautiful costumes : the men allow their beard to grow as nature intended them to wear it, and their black tunics and enormous closely-pleated breeches, their red stockings, and broad-brimmed, pointed hats, give them a somewhat foreign appearance, and, at the same time, an air of sober dignity. The people there, are

mostly engaged in glass-blowing, and also manufacture clocks, which they export half the world over.

On the other side of the forest lives a branch of the same race, but their work has given them different habits and customs from those which distinguish the glass-blowers. They make a trade of their wood ; they fell and hew the pines, float them down the Nagold into the Neckar, and from the upper Neckar along the Rhine, far into Holland, and the inhabitants of the Black Forest, with their long rafts, are a familiar feature on that coast ; they stop at every town which lies on the banks of the river, and wait haughtily till their planks and beams are all sold off, disposing of their longest and strongest planks for large sums of money to the "Mynheers," who make ships out of them. So these people are now used to leading a rough and roaming life. Their joy is to float down stream on their rafts, and their sorrow is to journey up stream again along the bank. That is why their costume is so different from that of the glass-blowers in the other part of the forest. They wear dark linen shirts, and green braces of a hand's-breadth across their broad chests ; black leather trousers, with a brass footrule for a badge protruding out of one pocket. Their boots, however, are their great pride and joy, for they are the largest, apparently, that have ever been in fashion in any part of the world ; they can be drawn up two spans above the knee, and the "raftsmen" can wade about in three feet of water without wetting their feet.

A short time ago the inhabitants of this forest still believed in wood-spirits, and it is only lately that they have been able to shake off these foolish superstitions. It is a curious fact that even the wood-spirits, who, according to the legends, live in the Black Forest, have

become divided according to their different costumes. And thus it is asserted that the little glass-blower is a benevolent gnome of three and a half feet high, and is never to be seen except in a minute broad-brimmed, pointed hat, tunic, breeches, and red stockings. The Dutchman Michael, however, who haunts the other side of the forest, is said to be a gigantic, broad-shouldered fellow, in a raftsmen's dress, and many who have seen him will swear that they would not like to be the ones to pay for the calves required to provide enough hide for his boots. "So tall that an average man would only reach up to his shoulder"—so they say, and declare that that is no exaggeration.

A young fellow belonging to the Black Forest had once an extraordinary experience with these wood-spirits, which I will now relate to you. Well, there lived once upon a time in the Black Forest, a widow, Mistress Barbara Munk; her husband had been a charcoal-burner, and after his death she gradually trained her sixteen-year-old boy to the same profession. Young Peter Munk, an intelligent lad, was quite satisfied to sit all the week over a smoky charcoal mound, or to journey down into the towns, a black and smutty object, avoided by everyone, to sell his charcoal, because this was the existence he had been accustomed to all through his father's lifetime. But a charcoal-burner has much time for meditation about himself and other people, and when Peter Munk sat over his burner the dark trees round about him seemed to whisper to his heart, and the deep silence of the forest moved him to tears and stirred him with an undefinable longing. Something troubled and annoyed him, and he could not exactly say what. At last he took note of what it was which annoyed him: it was his station in life. "A grubby,

lonely charcoal-burner ! ” he said to himself. “ It is a miserable life. Now, the glass-blowers and clockmakers, even the strolling musicians, of a Sunday evening are regarded with great respect. But if Peter Munk has a wash and a brush up, and appears in his father’s best coat with silver buttons, and brand, new red stockings, someone, perchance, walks behind him, and wonders who that smart lad can be, admiring his red stockings and easy gait, and then, if he should pass him, and look round—why, then, he would, of course, say : ‘ Oh, it is only Peter Munk, the charcoal-burner ! ’ ”

Even the raftsmen on the opposite side aroused his envy. When these giants of the forest paid them a visit, and stood looking on at the dance, in their splendid clothes, covered with quite half-a-centner of silver buttons, buckles, and chains, and when he watched them, with legs far apart, smoking their long pipes from Cologne like the greatest “ Mynheer ” in the land, and swearing Dutch oaths—when he gazed on the handsome faces of these raftsmen he could imagine no more perfect picture of a happy man. And when these fortunate creatures produced out of their pockets whole handfuls of dollars, with which they staked on the turn of the dice, five florins here, ten there, he felt almost dizzy, and crept home to his hut with a troubled heart, for in the evening or on many a feast day he had seen more money gambled away by one or other of these “ Timber Lords ” than he had ever earned in a whole year. There were especially three of these men of whom he could not make up his mind which he admired the most. One of them was a big, fat fellow with a red face, who was considered the richest man in the neighbourhood. He was called “ Big Ezekiel.” He went twice a year to Amsterdam with timber, and always had the good

fortune to sell it so much dearer than the others, that, while they were obliged to return home on foot, he performed the journey in great luxury. The other was the tallest and thinnest man in all the forest; he was called the "Barge-Pole," and Munk especially envied him his extraordinary audacity. He contradicted the most distinguished persons, and, when the tavern was full of people, he appropriated more room than four of the fattest men, for he either put both elbows on the table or tucked up one of his long legs on the seat, and yet no one dared to expostulate, because he had an enormous amount of money. The third was a handsome young man, who was the best dancer for miles round, and had, therefore, earned the name of the "Ballroom King." He had been a poor man, and entered the service of a great timber merchant. Then suddenly he became enormously rich; some said he had discovered a pot full of gold under an old fir-tree; others declared that he was fishing one day not far from Bingen on the Rhine with one of those pikes which the raftsmen use for spearing fish, and that he fished up a bag of gold pieces, belonging, probably, to the great Nibelungen treasure, which is buried somewhere there. Anyhow, he all at once became very rich, and was respected like a prince by young and old.

Peter Munk, the charcoal-burner, thought a great deal about these three men when he sat alone in the pine forest. It is true that they had all three a great fault, for which they were universally hated, and this was their inhuman avarice and their want of feeling in their dealings with the poor and towards their creditors, for the natives of the Black Forest are a kind-hearted race. But one knows how it is in these cases: although they were hated for their avarice they were respected

for their money—for what other men could throw away their dollars as if they had merely shaken them off the trees ?

“ There is no other way out of it,” said Peter one day to himself in sore distress—for the day before had been a feast day, and there had been a large assembly in the tavern ; “ if I do not make my fortune soon, I shall do myself some real harm. If only I were respected and rich like fat Ezekiel, or daring and powerful like the ‘ Barge Pole,’ or if I were only famous like the ‘ Ball-room King,’ and could throw dollars instead of pence to the musicians ! Now, where can that fellow get his money from ? ” He thought over all sorts of ways by which money was to be got, but none of these satisfied him. At last he recollected the legends about people who, in days gone by, had become rich with the help of Dutch Michael, or the little glass-blower. While his father was still alive, other poor people had often visited them, and they had had long discussions about rich men, and how they had made their fortunes. He remembered that the glass mannikin had played a large part in these stories, and, indeed, now that he thought it over, he could almost recollect the little verse which, when uttered on Fir-tree Knoll in the middle of the forest, caused the gnome to appear. It began :

“ Treasure Bogey, in pine wood green,
How many centuries you have seen ;
Yours is the land where pines are grown——”

But, rack his brains as he would, he could not remember a single other line. He often thought of asking some old man how the rest of the password ran, but he was always restrained by a certain shyness about revealing his thoughts, and he also made up his mind that the

legend of the little glass-blower could not be very widely known, and very few people could be acquainted with the password, for there were not many rich people in the forest; and, besides, why had his father and those other poor folk never tried their luck? He eventually induced his mother one day to talk about the mannikin, but she only told him what he already knew, could also only remember the first few lines of the password, and finally informed him, that the gnome only appeared to people who had been born on a Sunday, between eleven and two. He himself would, doubtless, be able to see him, if only he knew the password, for he had been born at twelve on a Sunday morning.

When Peter Munk, the charcoal-burner, heard that he was beyond himself with joy and with longing to start out on this quest. It seemed to him quite sufficient that he knew part of the password and had been born on a Sunday, and he felt sure the little glass-blower would appear to him. One day when he had sold his charcoal he did not light his burner again, but, dressing himself in his father's best coat and new red stockings, he put on his Sunday hat, and, grasping his staff of black-thorn in his hand, he said farewell to his mother: "I must be off to the office in the town, for we shall soon have to draw lots as to who shall do his military service, so I thought I would just remind the recruiting officer that you are a widow and I your only son." His mother approved of this idea, but he set out for Fir-tree Knoll. Fir-tree Knoll lies on the highest ridge of the Black Forest, and within a circumference of two leagues there was, in those days, not a single village, nor even a hut, for superstitious people held that the neighbourhood was unsafe. No one cared to fell wood in that district, however tall and fine the pines might be, for often,

when woodcutters were working there, an axehead had fallen out of its socket, and had lodged in someone's foot ; or the trees had tumbled down without any warning, knocking over, and injuring, the men, sometimes even killing them ; and the finest trees from there could only be used as firewood, for the timber merchants would never take a single plank from Fir-tree Knoll on to their rafts, because the legend ran, that the man and his timber were sure to come to grief if he took the smallest piece of wood from the Knoll with him on to the water. Thus it came to pass that the trees all round Fir-tree Knoll stood so close and high that it was quite dark there even on the brightest day, and Peter Munk almost felt his courage fail him. There was no sound of voices, no footsteps but his own, no ring from the stroke of an axe ; even the birds seemed to have flown from this dense pine wood gloom.

Peter Munk had now reached the highest point of Fir-tree Knoll, and stood before a pine-tree of enormous circumference, for which a Dutch shipbuilder would have paid many hundred florins in hard cash. " This," thought he, " must be where the treasure bogey lives," and, taking off his big Sunday hat, he bowed low, then, clearing his throat, said in a trembling voice : " I wish you a very good-evening, Master Glass-blower." But there was no answer, and all around the silence reigned as before. " Perhaps I ought to say the little verse after all," he reflected, and murmured :

" ' Treasure Bogey, in pine wood green,
How many centuries you have seen ;
Yours is the land where pines are grown——' "

As he said these words he saw, with a feeling of sickening fear, a tiny, quaint little figure looking round

the massive pine trunk. It seemed to him that he saw the glass mannikin exactly as he had been described, with the little black tunic, the tiny red stockings, and minute hat, everything was exactly as he had been told it would be, even to the pale, but shrewd, clever little face. But oh! the glass mannikin had disappeared as quickly as he had appeared. "Master Glass-blower," cried Peter Munk after a moment's hesitation, "please have the goodness not to take me for a fool. Master Glass-blower, if you think that I did not see you, you are much mistaken, for I saw you quite well, peeping out from behind the tree." There was still no answer, but he thought he sometimes heard a little hoarse chuckle from behind the tree. At last his impatience conquered the fear which had till then restrained him. "Wait a minute, little man," he cried, "I will soon catch you." And he made one sudden leap behind the fir-tree, but there was no treasure bogey to be seen in all the green pine forest, but only a pretty little squirrel racing up the trees. Peter Munk shook his head; he realised that he had succeeded up to a certain point with his incantation, and that, perhaps, only one line was needed to complete the password, and to entice the little glass-blower out of his hiding-place; but though he thought till he was weary he could not remember it. The squirrel appeared on the lowest branch of the fir-tree, and seemed either trying to encourage him or laughing at him. The squirrel licked himself, waved his tail, blinked at him with his bright little eyes, and at last Peter grew quite frightened of being alone with this animal, for at one moment he seemed to have a human head and a pointed hat, and at the next moment he again became an ordinary squirrel, except for having red stockings and black shoes on his hind feet. In

short, it was an amusing animal, but, nevertheless, Peter shivered, for he felt he was meddling in uncanny things.

Peter withdrew faster than he had come. The gloom in the pine forest seemed to deepen every minute, the trees to draw closer together, and such a feeling of horror came over him, that he raced away at a sharp trot, and only became calmer when he heard the barking of dogs in the distance, and caught sight of smoke rising from a hut through the trees. But when he got near, and saw the costume worn by the inhabitants of the hut, he discovered that in his terror he had fled in exactly the opposite direction from that which he had intended to follow, and that, instead of returning to the glass-blowers, he had reached the dominion of the raftsmen. The people who lived in the hut were woodcutters : an old man and his son, the master of the house, and some grown-up grandchildren. They gave the charcoal-burner, who begged them for a night's lodging, a friendly reception, without asking his name or where he lived ; he was given apple wine to drink, and in the evening they served up a large woodcock, which is the greatest delicacy of the Black Forest.

When the evening meal was over, the mistress of the house and her daughters sat down to their distaffs, round the light which the young men supplied with the purest pine resin ; the grandfather, the guest, and the master of the house smoked, and watched the women at their work ; while the boys were engaged in carving forks and spoons out of pieces of wood. Outside in the forest, the storm howled and raged through the pines ; now and again a heavy thud was heard, as if a whole tree had been torn up by the roots and had come crashing down. The fearless youths wished to run out into the forest and watch this terribly beautiful scene, but their

grandfather held them back with a peremptory word and a severe glance. "I don't advise anyone to leave this house at present," he called out to them, "for, by God! he would never return; Michael, the Dutchman, is building himself a new raft in the forest to-night."

The little ones looked at him in astonishment; they had probably already heard of Michael, the Dutchman but they now begged their granddad to tell them a nice story about him. Peter Munk also, who, on the other side of the forest, had only heard of Michael, the Dutchman, in a vague way, joined in the petition, and asked the old man who he was and where he lived. "He is the lord of this forest, and I conclude that, as at your time of life you have never heard of him, you must live over there near Fir-tree Knoll, or even farther away. But I will tell you what I know of Michael, the Dutchman, and how the legend about him runs. About a hundred years ago, at least so my granddad used to say, there were no more honest folk far and wide than the natives of the Black Forest. Now that there is so much money in the country the people are false-hearted and bad; the young lads dance and yell of a Sunday, and swear in the most disgraceful fashion. Formerly, however, things were different, and if he were looking in at the window at this moment, I would still say what I have always said, that Michael, the Dutchman, is guilty of all this depravity. There lived, then, a hundred years ago or more, a rich timber owner who had a great many servants; he carried on an extensive trade far down the Rhine, and his business was blessed, for he was a pious man. One evening a man came to his door who was different from anyone he had ever seen before. His dress was like that of all

the Black Forest lads, but he was a good head taller than any of them, and one could never have believed that such a giant could exist. The lad asked the timber merchant for work, and the latter, seeing that he was strong, and capable of carrying heavy loads, bargained with him as to his wages, and they came to terms. Michael proved a workman such as this timber merchant had never had before. In hewing wood he did the work of three, and when six people dragged at one end of a log he carried the other alone. When he had been employed for six months in felling wood, he went one day to his master, and made him this request :

“ ‘I have now been chopping wood here long enough, and I should like to see where my logs go to, so how would it be if you gave me a post on a raft for once ? ’

“The timber merchant answered: ‘I won’t stand in your way, Michael, if you wish to go out into the world for a bit ; it is true that I need strong people like you for felling wood, while on the rafts a skilful promptitude is the most necessary quality ; but for this once you shall have your own way.’

“And so he did ; the raft on which he was to start was made of eight logs, and they of the stoutest timber which could be procured. But what happened ? On the preceding evening tall Michael brought eight more logs down to the water’s edge, stouter and longer than any which had ever been seen, and yet everyone felt quite horrified at the ease with which he bore them on his shoulder, as if he had been carrying a punt pole. Where he had hewn them no one knows to this day. The timber merchant laughed in his heart when he saw them, for he was calculating what price they would fetch. But Michael merely said : ‘There ! Those are for my journey ; I could never get off on those little bits

of matchwood.' His master wished to present him with a pair of raftsman's boots, as a mark of gratitude, but he threw them aside, and produced a pair the like of which had never been seen before ; my grandfather assured me they weighed a hundred pounds, and were five feet long.

"The raft floated off ; and if Michael had previously astonished the timber merchant it was now the raftsmen's turn to be amazed. They had expected that, on account of its enormous logs, the raft would go more slowly down the stream than usual, but instead of this, it flew along with the speed of an arrow as soon as it got into the Neckar ; if they reached a turn in the Neckar where the raftsmen had usually had much trouble to keep the raft in the middle of the stream, and prevent it from running aground on to the shingle or the sand, Michael would jump into the water, and with one push he would turn the raft to the right or to the left, so that it floated on without any catastrophe ; then, when they came to a straight bit, he would run forward, and, telling the others to put down their poles, he would plunge his enormous beam into the water, and with one thrust the raft would leap forward, so that the banks on either side, the trees, and the villages seemed to race past. In this manner they reached Cologne, on the Rhine, in half the time which it usually took them, and it was here that they had always sold their load. But now Michael put in a word : ' Now, you are true merchants, and know your business. Do you imagine these people here in Cologne need all the wood which comes from the Black Forest for themselves ? No ; they buy it from you at half its real value, and dispose of it to Holland for a higher price. Let us sell the smaller timber here, and proceed to Holland with the rest.

Anything we make out of this business over and above the usual profits shall be to our own advantage.'

"Thus spake the cunning Michael, and the others were content; some of them because they were glad to go to Holland and see the country, and the remainder on account of the money. There was only one among them who was honest, and warned them not to expose their master's property to any risk, or to cheat him for the sake of getting a higher price, but they did not listen to him, but forgot his words. Michael, the Dutchman, however, did not forget them. So they floated down the Rhine, and Michael steered the raft, and brought it very quickly to Rotterdam. There they were offered a price four times larger than the sum they had formerly demanded, and Michael's huge logs especially fetched an enormous amount of money. When these Black Forest lads saw so much money, they could hardly contain themselves for joy. Michael divided the profits, and set aside one part for the timber merchant and three parts to be shared among the men. And now they consorted with sailors, and rubbed shoulders in the lowest pot-houses with all the scum of the earth, wasting and gambling away their money, but Dutch Michael sold the good fellow who had remonstrated with them to a man stealer, and no more was heard of him. From henceforth, Holland was regarded as a sort of paradise to the lads in the Black Forest, with Dutch Michael as their king. The timber merchant knew nothing of this business for a long time; but money and oaths, bad habits, drinking, and gambling insensibly gained ground in the country.

"When the story came to light Dutch Michael was nowhere to be found; but he is certainly not dead, he has haunted the forest for a hundred years, and it is said

that he has helped many to become rich, but—at the cost of their wretched souls, and I will say no more. This much, however, is certain, that he still on stormy nights roams round Fir-tree Knoll, where no one will hew wood, and seeks out the finest pine-trees; and my father saw him snap off a tree four feet in diameter in his hand, with as much ease as if it had been a piece of grass. He gives this timber to those who forsake right and seek him out; they bring the logs down to the water at midnight, and he steers them to Holland. But were I lord and king of Holland I should have him riddled with shot, for every ship which has even a single plank from Dutch Michael is bound to sink. That is why one hears of so many shipwrecks, for, otherwise, how could a fine, strong ship, as big as a church, come to grief on the water? But whenever Dutch Michael fells a tree on a stormy night in the Black Forest, one of his old planks springs a leak in some ship; the water pours in, and the vessel, with all hands, is lost. That is the legend of Michael, the Dutchman, and it is quite true that everything that is bad in the Black Forest originates with him. Oh! it may be true that he can make one rich," added the old man mysteriously, "but I should not care to have anything from him; on no account would I wish to be in either fat Ezekiel's shoes or the Barge Pole's; the Ballroom King must have sold himself too!"

The storm had abated during the old man's story; the girls lit their lamps in a subdued manner, and left the room; the men put a sackful of leaves on the seat in the chimney corner as a pillow for Peter Munk, and wished him good-night.

Peter Munk, the charcoal-burner, had never had such strange dreams as he had that night. At one moment

he thought he saw the awful and gigantic figure of Michael, the Dutchman, walk up to the window, and, stretching out an enormously long arm into the room, dangle a bag full of gold pieces before his eyes, shaking it so that the coins jangled together with a clear and alluring sound ; the next moment he saw the benevolent little glass-blower riding round the room on a huge green bottle, and he thought he heard the same hoarse laugh as on Fir-tree Knoll ; now something buzzed in his left ear :

“ In Holland there is gold,
For the smallest thing you’ve sold,
They will pay you, so I’m told,
Much gold, much gold.”

Then he heard once more in his right ear the treasure bogey’s song in the green pine wood, and a tiny voice whispered : “ You stupid old charcoal-burner, stupid Peter Munk, can you not find a word to rhyme with *grown*?—and you were born on Sunday as the clock struck twelve. Make a rhyme, you stupid Peter ; make a rhyme.”

He sighed and groaned in his sleep, and struggled to find a rhyme, but as he had never made one in his life his efforts, in his dream were in vain. When, however, he awoke, with the first peep of dawn, the memory of his dream forced itself upon him with a strange persistency. He sat up to the table with folded arms, and thought over the whispering voice, which was still ringing in his ears. “ Make a rhyme, you stupid Peter ; make a rhyme,” he said to himself, and drummed on his forehead with his finger, but could extract no rhyme. As he was still sitting there, staring sadly in front of him, and searching for a word to rhyme with *grown*, three

lads passed the house on their way through the wood, and one of them was singing as he walked :

“ Over the mountains I have sped,
Through smiling valleys have I flown,
But ne’er have I found rose so red
As on my lady’s cheek is shown.”

The words echoed through Peter’s ear like a clap of thunder, and he hastily picked himself up, and tore out of the house, because he thought he could not have heard right, and, rushing up to the three lads, he quickly, and not too gently, seized the singer by the arm. “ Stop, my friend ! ” he cried ; “ what word had you there which rhymed with *grown* ? Do me the kindness to repeat what you were singing.”

“ What does that matter to you, my lad ? ” answered the young fellow. “ I suppose I may sing what I like ; and let go of my arm at once, or——”

“ No ; you must tell me what you were singing ! ” cried Peter in an agonised voice, and held him still more tightly. The other two, however, when they saw this did not hesitate to lay their fists on Peter’s back with some energy, and gave him such a thrashing that, out of sheer pain, he unloosed his hold of the third man’s clothes, and fell to his knees in utter exhaustion. “ Now you’ve got your deserts,” they said, with a laugh, “ and remember, you silly boy, never to assault people like us on an open road.”

“ Oh, I only want to commit it to memory,” replied the charcoal-burner, with a sigh. “ But even if I must have a thrashing, you might do me the kindness to repeat clearly what that man was singing.”

They laughed again, and mocked at him, but he who

had sung the song recited it to him, and they went on their way, laughing and singing.

“‘*Shown*,’ then,” said the poor victim, painfully struggling to his legs — “‘*shown*’ to rhyme with ‘*grown*’ — now, glass-blower, we will get the whole password.” He went into the hut to fetch his hat and his long staff, said good-bye to its inhabitants, and started off on his return journey to Fir-tree Knoll. He walked slowly along in deep thought, searching for that last line. At last, when he had already reached the neighbourhood of Fir-tree Knoll, and the pines had become taller and more dense, he discovered the end of the verse, and jumped high into the air with joy. But suddenly a gigantic man in a raftsman’s dress, with a staff the size of a mast in his hand, appeared from behind the fir-trees. Peter Munk nearly collapsed when he saw this figure approaching him with slow steps, for he thought it could be no other than Dutch Michael. The awful apparition drew near in utter silence, and now and then Peter took a stealthy look at him. He was certainly a head taller than the tallest man Peter had ever seen, his face was no longer young, and yet could not be called old, but was deeply lined and wrinkled; he wore a linen shirt, and enormous boots, drawn up over the leathered trousers, all of which, Peter noticed, fitted with the description of him in the legend.

“Peter Munk, what are you doing on Fir-tree Knoll?” asked the Forest King at last in a deep, menacing voice.

“Good - morning, countryman,” answered Peter, wishing to appear undismayed, but trembling violently all the same. “I am going home by Fir-tree Knoll.”

“Peter Munk,” replied the other, with a piercing and terrible glance, “your way does not lie through this grove.”

"Well, this is not exactly the direct way," he said, "but it is warm to-day, and I thought it would be cooler in here."

"Do not lie, charcoal-burner," cried Dutch Michael in a voice of thunder, "or I will smite you to the ground with this pole. Do you think I have not seen you begging from the Little Man?" he added softly. "Well, well, that was a silly prank, and it is a good thing that you did not know the password. The little fellow is a miser, and does not give much, and the man to whom he gives it, does not have a happy life. Peter, you are a poor simpleton, and my soul is moved to pity on your behalf that such a lively, active fellow, who could really do something in the world, should burn charcoal! When others shake big dollars and ducats out of their sleeve, you can hardly afford to spend a modest sixpence; it is a wretched life!"

"It is quite true, and you are quite right; it is a wretched life."

"Well, it does not matter to me," continued the terrible Michael; "I have already helped many a brave fellow out of his misery, and you would not be the first. Just tell me, in the first place, how many hundred dollars you will need."

With these words he rattled his money together in his enormous pocket, and Peter heard the same sound which had haunted him in his dream the night before. But his heart beat painfully and anxiously at these words, he felt first hot, then cold, and Dutch Michael did not look as if he meant to give away money from sheer pity without asking anything in return. The mysterious words of the old man about rich people came back to him, and, prompted by an undefinable terror and anxiety, he cried: "Many thanks, sir! But I have no wish

to have anything to do with you ; I know all about you," and ran away as hard as he could. But the wood-spirit kept up with him, with enormous strides, and muttered in a deep, threatening voice : " You will repent this, Peter ; it is written in your fate, and I can see it in your eyes, that you shall not escape me. Do not run so fast ; listen one moment to reason, for here we are already at my boundary." When Peter heard this, and saw a narrow ditch a few yards in front of him, he hurried still more to get across the boundary, so that Michael also had to quicken his pace, and gave chase, with threats and curses. The young man made one desperate leap over the ditch, for he perceived that the wood-spirit had raised his staff, and was about to shatter it on his shoulders. He got safely across, and the staff was shattered to pieces in the air, as if it had struck against an invisible wall, a long bit of it falling at Peter's feet.

He picked it up triumphantly, meaning to throw it back at the vicious Dutchman, but at that very moment he felt the piece of wood quiver in his hand, and, to his horror, he saw that he was holding an enormous snake, which was rearing itself up at him with flashing eyes and venomous tongue. He let it go, but it had already wound itself round his arm, and with swaying head was creeping nearer to his face. Then, all of a sudden, a huge woodcock swooped down, and, seizing the snake's head in his beak, he carried it up into the air with him, and Dutch Michael, who was watching all this from the other side of the ditch, yelled and screamed, and raged, when he saw the snake being carried off by a superior force.

Trembling with exhaustion, Peter went on his way ; the path became steeper, his surroundings wilder, and he soon found himself at the enormous fir-tree. He made

a low bow to the invisible glass-blower, as he had done the day before, and then began :

“ ‘ Treasure Bogey, in pine wood green,
How many centuries you have seen ;
Yours is the land where pines are grown,
Only to Sunday bairns you’re shown.’ ”

“ You have not quite hit on it,” said a tiny, gentle voice quite near to him, “ but as it is you, Peter Munk, I will let it pass.” The lad looked round in astonishment, and under a beautiful pine-tree, sat a tiny little old man in a black tunic and red stockings, and a big hat on his head. He had a striking, benevolent little face, with a minute beard as fine as a cobweb ; he was smoking, which gave him a comical appearance, out of a pipe of blue glass, and when Peter took a step nearer he saw with amazement that the little man’s clothes and stockings and hat, were all made of coloured glass, but it was flexible, as if it were still hot, and bent to every movement of his body like a piece of stuff.

“ You have been meeting that insolent fellow, Dutch Michael ? ” said the little man, with a funny little cough between each word. “ He wanted to give you a good fright, but I have deprived him of his magic staff, and he shall never get hold of that again.”

“ Yes, Master Treasure Bogey,” replied Peter, with a low bow, “ I was in a fright. But you must have been that princely woodcock who pecked the snake to death, and for that I give you my warmest thanks. I have come to ask for your advice. I am in a very bad way, and everything goes against me ; a charcoal-burner has few prospects, and, as I am still young, I thought there might be something better to be made out of me, for

I often see other people who have got on so well in such a short time: Ezekiel, for example, and the Ballroom King—those two seem to find gold at every turn !”

“Peter,” said the little man solemnly, puffing the smoke out of his pipe, “Peter, do not mention those men. What advantage do they get if they appear to be happy in this world for a few years, only to be the more unhappy hereafter ? You must never despise your work ; your father and grandfather were fine men, Peter Munk, and yet they followed the same profession. I cannot believe that it is love of idleness which has brought you to me.”

Peter felt frightened at the little man’s solemnity, and blushed. “No,” he said ; “idleness, I know, Master Treasure Bogey of the Pine wood—idleness is the beginning of all misery, but you cannot find fault with me for desiring a better station in life than that which I at present occupy. A charcoal-burner is considered a very humble person, but the glass-blowers, raftsmen, and clockmakers are far more respected.”

“Pride often comes before a fall,” replied the small lord of the pine wood more kindly. “You are a strange race, you men. It is rare that any one of you is content with the station wherein he has been born and bred. And of what use would it be if you were a glass-blower ? You would then wish to be a timber merchant, and if you were a timber merchant it would be the forester’s work, or the judge’s house, which you would covet next. But so be it ; if you promise to work well I will help you to something better, Peter. It is my custom to grant three wishes, to every Sunday child who seeks me out. The first two are free, the third I can deny if I think it foolish, so wish for something. But, Peter, take care that it be something good and useful !”

"Hurrah! you are a splendid little glass-blower, and people do well to dub you Treasure Bogey, for real treasures are to be got from you. Well then, if I may really wish for what lies nearest my heart, I should like, in the first place, to be able to dance better than the Ballroom King, and always to have as much money in my pocket as fat Ezekiel."

"You fool!" answered the little man angrily, "what a contemptible thing to wish to dance well and to have heaps of money to gamble away. Are you not ashamed, you stupid Peter, to cheat yourself of so much happiness? What good would it do you or your poor mother for you to be able to dance? What good would your money do you when, according to your wish, it would all be spent at the public-house, like that of the wretched Ballroom King? Then you would have no more all the week, and would be in as great want as before. I will only give you one other free wish, and take care that it is something sensible."

Peter scratched his head, and said, after some hesitation: "Well, I will wish for the finest and prettiest glass works in the whole forest, with all the apparatus and money necessary for starting business."

"Nothing else?" asked the little man anxiously.

"Well, you might throw in a horse and a little cart."

"Oh, you stupid charcoal-burner!" cried the little man, flinging his glass pipe, in his anger, at a huge pine-tree, so that it smashed into a hundred pieces. "Horses? Carts? Judgment, I tell you—judgment; you ought to have wished for a sound, manly judgment and a keener power of discernment instead of horses and carts. Now, don't be so sad, but we will see that you come to no harm, for the second wish was not altogether lacking

in sense. A glass-blower's good workshop may certainly make a man of you as well as a craftmaster, but you should have chosen judgment and discernment also. Your carriage and horse would then have followed as a matter of course."

"But, Master Treasure Bogey," replied Peter, "I have still one wish left, so I could wish for a greater power of judgment now, if that is really as essential as you seem to think."

"No more! You will find yourself again in many a difficulty, where you will be only too glad to have still another wish. Now be off to your home. Here," said the little spirit of the pine wood, drawing a tiny purse out of his pocket, "here are two thousand florins, and that will be enough. Do not come and ask me again for money, for I should then be obliged to string you upon the highest fir-tree—that has been my policy ever since I have lived in the forest. Let me see. It is three days since old, nodding Fritz died who owned the largest glass works in all the forest. You can go there early to-morrow morning, and bid whatever you think fit for his business. Keep straight, and work hard, and I will pay you a visit now and again, to lend you a helping hand and give you advice, since I would not bestow a greater power of judgment on you. But, and this I am saying in all seriousness, your first wish was really wicked. Do not let yourself run wild in public-houses. Peter, that sort of thing has never done anyone any good." While he was speaking the little man had produced another pipe of finest alabaster glass, and had filled it with dried fir cones, and stuck it into his toothless little mouth. Then he brought out a huge magnifying-glass, and, stepping into the sun, lit his pipe with it. When he had done this he held out his hand to

Peter in a friendly manner, gave him one or two more useful hints as to the way, and, smoking and puffing at his pipe more and more violently, he eventually disappeared in a cloud of smoke, which smelt of real Dutch tobacco, and, slowly curling upwards, dispersed among the pine needles.

When Peter arrived home, he found his mother in great anxiety on his account, for she had made up her mind that her son had been recruited as a soldier. He, however, was very happy, and in the best of spirits. He told her how he had met a kind friend in the forest who had advanced him money with which he might start a better business than that of charcoal-burning. Although his mother had lived for thirty years in a charcoal-burner's hut, and was as accustomed to the sight of sooty people as a miller's wife is to her husband's mealy face, she was yet vain enough to despise her former station when Peter described his brilliant prospects, and to remark: "Well, as the mother of a man who possesses glass works, I shall certainly not be quite on the same level as our neighbours Peggy and Betsy, and for the future I shall take the front seat in church, where the big people sit." Her son had soon struck a bargain with the old glass-blower's heirs. He kept the workmen which he found there in his service, and manufactured glass day and night. At first he liked the work very well; he used to stroll down in a leisurely way to the glass works, and walk about there in an important manner, with his hands in his pockets, looking at this and that, and making a variety of remarks, at which his workmen sometimes laughed immoderately, and his greatest joy was to see them blowing the glass, and sometimes he would set to work himself, and make the strangest figures out of the pliant mass. He soon,

however, became disgusted with the work, and at first he began going to the works for only an hour a day, then only every other day, finally only once a week, and his workmen did what they liked. But this all resulted from his frequenting the public-houses. The Sunday after he had returned home from Fir-tree Knoll, he went to the tavern, and the first to take the floor when the music struck up was the Ballroom King, while fat Ezekiel was already in his place behind the bar, playing at dice for a five-dollar piece. Then Peter thrust his hand quickly into his pocket to see if the little glass-blower had kept his word, and, behold! his pocket was bulging with gold and silver. He found, too, that his legs twitched as if they were longing to hop round and dance, and when the first dance was ended, he stationed himself at the top of the room with his partner, next to the Ballroom King, and if the latter hopped three feet into the air Peter hopped four feet and if his rival made dainty and intricate steps Peter twisted and turned on his feet till the onlookers were almost beside themselves with delight and astonishment. But when it was known in the ballroom that Peter had bought a glass-blower's business, and when they noticed that each time he danced past the musicians he threw them a six-dollar piece, their amazement knew no bounds. Some thought he had found a treasure heap in the forest, others that he had come in for a fortune; but at anyrate he was now universally respected, and considered a made man, just because he had money. If he lost twenty florins at cards in one evening, the money rattled and jingled in his pockets as if he still had a hundred dollars there.

When Peter saw how much he was looked up to, he could not control himself, so great was his pride and joy.

He squandered away his money by handfuls, and also shared it with those who were poorer than he, for he remembered how he himself had once been pinched by poverty. The Ballroom King's agility was quite put in the shade by the supernatural skill of this new dancer, and Peter was now called the Dancing Emperor. The wildest gamblers did not risk so much as he of a Sunday, but neither did they lose so much. And the more he lost, the more he won. But it all came to pass as he had besought the little glass-blower. He had expressed a wish always to have as much money in his pocket as fat Ezekiel, and it was precisely to this man that he gambled away his money. For when he lost twenty or thirty florins in one turn, he found them in his pocket once more as soon as Ezekiel had swept them in. Gradually he began to spend more time in carousing and gambling than any of the worst characters in the Black Forest, and he was more often dubbed Gambling Peter than the Dancing Emperor, for he now gambled nearly every week-day. Consequently his glass works gradually came to grief, and it was entirely the result of Peter's folly. He had an enormous quantity of glass made, but he had not bought with the works the secret by which to dispose of it to the greatest advantage. When it was finished he did not know how to get rid of all this glass, and sold it for half price to travelling peddlers, in order just to be able to pay his workmen.

One evening, as he was walking home from the public-house, he could not help thinking, with sorrow and fear, of the ruin of his fortune, in spite of the quantity of wine he had drunk in the hopes of feeling merrier. Suddenly he became conscious of the fact that someone was walking by his side, and looking round he saw that it was the little glass-blower. Then he gave vent to his anger

and indignation, and swore by all that was holy that the little man had been the cause of all his misfortunes. "What is the good of my horse and cart now?" he cried. "What is the use of my works and all my glass? Even when I was a miserable little charcoal-burner I was really happier, for I had no care. And now I do not know when the officer may walk in and value my goods, and confiscate them in order to pay my debts."

"Really!" answered the little glass-blower. "Really! So I am to blame, then, if you are unhappy? Is this your thanks for all my kindness? Who told you to wish for such foolish things? You wanted to be a glass-blower without knowing where to sell your glass? Did I not tell you that you should be very cautious with your wishes? Discrimination and prudence, Peter, were what you wanted."

"Discrimination and prudence!" he cried; "I am as prudent a fellow as any one of them, and I will prove that to you, my little glass-blower." And with these words, he roughly seized the mannikin by the collar, and cried: "Now I have got you, Treasure Bogey of Pine Wood Green; and I will now have my third wish, and you shall grant it me. Here on this very spot, then, I will have twice a hundred thousand hard dollars, and a house, and—— Oh, what agony!" he yelled, shaking his hand, for the little glass-blower had transformed himself into molten glass, and was burning his hand like a flaming fire, but nothing more was to be seen of the little man.

For many days Peter's swollen hand reminded him of his ingratitude and foolishness. But after that he stifled his conscience, and said: "Well, even if they sell my glass works and everything else I shall still have fat

Ezekiel to fall back upon ; as long as he has some money of a Sunday I shall not lack."

Yes, Peter ; but what if he has none ? And that was what happened one day, and it became a real mathematical problem. For one Sunday he came driving up to the tavern, and the people poked their heads out of the windows, and some said : " Here comes Gambling Peter " ; and others : " Yes ; the Dancing Emperor, the rich glass-blower " ; and a third shook his head, and said : " Yes ; one can do this sort of thing with a fortune ; but everyone is speaking of his debts, and someone was saying in the town that the brokers will be in very soon now." Meanwhile Peter had saluted the guests at the window in a haughty and solemn manner, and, stepping out of his cart, he cried : " Good-evening, landlord ; has fat Ezekiel arrived yet ? " And a deep voice exclaimed : " Come in, Peter ; we have kept you a place ; we are all here playing cards." So Peter stepped into the taproom, and thrusting his hand in his pocket he concluded that Ezekiel must have been in luck, for his pockets were filled to overflowing.

He sat down at the table, opposite the others, and played, and won and lost in turn, and thus they continued to play till other honest folk went home towards evening, but they played on by candle-light, until their two companions said : " That is enough now ; we must get home to our wives and children." But Gambling Peter called upon fat Ezekiel to remain. For a long time he would not, but at last he exclaimed : " Very well, then ; I will just count my money, and then we will play at dice for five-florin points ; it is child's play to risk less." He produced his purse, and counted, and found he had a hundred florins, so Gambling Peter knew now how much he himself had without having to count. But

if Ezekiel had won earlier in the day he now lost point by point, and cursed his luck in horrible language. If he threw a doublet Gambling Peter immediately threw doublets too, and always two points higher. At length Ezekiel placed his last five florins on the table, and cried : " Once more ; and if I lose again I shall not stop, for you will have to advance me something out of your winnings, Peter. An honest fellow always helps others."

" As much as you like, even to a hundred florins," said the Dancing Emperor, in high spirits at his success, and fat Ezekiel shook the dice-box, and threw fifteen : " Doublets ! " he cried. " Now, let us see." Peter, however, threw eighteen, and heard a well-known, hoarse voice behind him : " There ! that was the last."

He looked round, and Dutch Michael, in all his gigantic height, stood behind him. He dropped the money which he had already taken up in terror. But fat Ezekiel did not see the Forest King, and asked Gambling Peter to advance him ten florins towards the game. In a kind of dream he put his hand into his pocket, but there was no money there ; then he looked in his other pocket, but neither did he find anything there ; he turned his coat inside out, but not a brass farthing could he see, and it was only then that he remembered that his first wish had been always to have as much money as fat Ezekiel. It had all vanished like smoke.

Ezekiel and the landlord looked at him in astonishment, as he continued to search, and could not find his money. They refused to believe that he had no more, but when they had looked in his pockets themselves they lost their temper, and swore that Gambling Peter was a wicked sorcerer, and had spirited away all his winnings and his own money to his home. Peter

stoutly defended himself, but appearances were against him. Ezekiel declared he would tell this abominable story to everyone in the Black Forest, and the landlord promised to accompany him next morning at screech of dawn to the town, and accuse Peter Munk of being a sorcerer, and they would live, he added, to see him burnt alive. Then they fell upon him in perfect frenzy, and, tearing his shirt off his body, thrust him out of the door.

Not a star was shining in the sky as Peter slunk sadly homewards, but, nevertheless, he could distinctly distinguish a dark figure striding by his side, who eventually addressed him: "It is all over with you, Peter Munk—all your magnificence is at an end; and I could have told you that long ago, when you would not listen to me, and insisted on running after that stupid glass dwarf. Now you see what is the result when people despise my advice. But have a try with me, for I really sympathise with your troubles. No one has ever repented having turned to me for help, and to-morrow, if you are not frightened, I shall be at Fir-tree Knoll the whole day, and you can speak with me whenever you like to summon me." Peter was well aware who was speaking thus to him, but a feeling of horror overcame him. He made no answer, but ran home as fast as he could.

At these words the narrator was interrupted by a noise outside the tavern. A carriage was heard to drive up, and several voices called for a light, while a number of dogs mingled their howls with the loud knocking on the front door. The room which had been prepared for the carter and the two apprentices looked out over the road; the four guests sprang to their feet, and ran

there to find out what had happened. As far as they could see by the light of a single lantern a large travelling carriage stood before the door ; a tall man was engaged in lifting two veiled women out of the carriage, and they could see a coachman in livery unharnessing the horses, while a servant was getting down the box. " Thank God for this," sighed the carter ; " if these two leave this tavern with a whole skin I need have no fear about my cart."

" Quiet !" whispered the student. " I have a suspicion that it is not for us, but for these ladies, that they are lying in wait. Evidently the people downstairs have had information about their journey. If one could only warn them ! But stop ! There is no decent room for them in the whole inn except the one next door to mine. They are sure to take them there. Stay quietly in this room while I try to inform the servants."

The young man stole to his room, and put out the candles, only leaving the light which the landlady had given him. Then he listened at the door.

In a few minutes the landlady came upstairs with the two ladies, and, with a great many soft speeches, showed them into the neighbouring bedroom. She urged her guests to go to bed quickly, in order to repose themselves thoroughly from the fatigues of the journey. Then she went downstairs again. A short time after the student heard heavy, masculine footsteps on the stairs. He cautiously opened the door, and saw, through a tiny crack, the tall man who had assisted the ladies out of the carriage. He wore a huntsman's dress, with a dagger at his side, and it was evident that he was the lady's master of the horse, and her attendant on the journey. When the student saw that he had come

upstairs alone, he quickly opened the door, and made the man a sign to come in. He approached with some astonishment, but, before he could ask what was wanted of him, the young gentleman whispered: "Sir! you have got into a tavern full of robbers to-night."

The man started, but the student drew him right into the room, and told him how many things had contributed to arouse his suspicions about the house.

The huntsman was much troubled when he heard this. He informed the young man that the ladies, a countess and her maid, had at first wished to drive straight on through the night, but about half-a-league from the tavern they had encountered a man on horseback, who had accosted them, and had asked them whither they were travelling. When he heard that it was their intention to travel all night through the Spessart he had dissuaded them from their purpose by telling them that the locality was very unsafe. "If you attach any weight to the advice of an honest man," he had added, "you will give up that idea. There is a tavern not far from here in which, bad and uncomfortable as it is, you had much better remain till morning, rather than expose yourself unnecessarily to any danger on such a dark night." The man who had given them this advice, had seemed a very honest, respectable sort of fellow, and the Countess, afraid of being attacked by brigands, had given orders that a halt should be made at the tavern.

The huntsman held it to be his duty to warn the ladies of the danger which threatened them. He went into the other room, and in a few minutes he opened the door leading from the Countess's room to that of the student. The Countess, a lady of some forty years old, went up to the student, her face white with

fear, and made him tell the whole story over again. Then they consulted as to what, under these dangerous circumstances, it would be best to do, and determined to fetch the two servants, the apprentices, and the carter as quietly as possible, so as, in case of an attack, to be able to make a joint resistance.

This was quickly effected, and the door of the Countess's room leading on to the landing was then locked, and barricaded with tables and chairs. She put herself on to her bed with her maid, and the two servants kept watch. The other guests, however, and the huntsman settled themselves round the table in the student's room, and determined to wait for the advent of danger. It might have been about ten o'clock, and peace and quiet reigned in the house ; so far no one had made any signs of wishing to disturb the guests. Then the compass-maker remarked : " It would be as well if we did as before to keep ourselves awake. We are telling one another stories of the various things we have seen or heard, and, if Master Huntsman has no objection, we might once more proceed." Not only had the huntsman no objection, but, in order to show his acquiescence, he volunteered to tell a story himself, and began :

SAÏD'S FATE.

In the time of Haroun Al Raschid, ruler of Bagdad, there lived a man in Balsora named Benezar. He had just enough worldly goods to enable him to live in comfort and peace, without being obliged to carry on any business or drive a trade. Nor did he alter his manner of living even when a son was born to him. " Why should I haggle and bargain in my old age,"

he said to a neighbour, "in order to be able to leave my son Saïd some thousand more gold pieces, perhaps, if things go well, but a thousand less if business is bad? If two people eat, a third is satisfied, as the proverb says; and if he is a good boy he shall want for nothing." Thus spake Benezar; and he kept his word. For he did not bring up his son to any trade or profession; but he did not fail to read the Books of Wisdom with him, and since, in Benezar's opinion, nothing except learning, and a respectful bearing towards his elders, becomes a young man better than a stalwart arm and a brave heart, he had him instructed in the art of handling weapons while he was still quite young, and Saïd was considered among his contemporaries, and even among older lads, a valiant fighter, nor did anyone surpass him in riding and swimming.

When he was eighteen years old, his father sent him to the prophet's grave at Mecca, that he might say his prayers there, and perform all the religious rites prescribed by sacred command and tradition. Before he started, his father sent for him, commended him for his action, gave him some good advice, provided him with money, and then said: "There is something more, Saïd, my son: I am a man superior to public opinion. It is true that I like hearing stories about fairies and sorcerers, because it is a pleasant way of passing the time, but I am far from believing, like so many ignorant people, that these genii, or whoever they may be, have any influence on the life and actions of men. Your mother, however—she has been dead twelve years now—your mother believed in them as firmly as in the Koran; in fact, she even privately confided to me, after I had sworn to repeat it to no one but her child, that she herself had been in constant

communication with a fairy from the time of her birth. I laughed at her about this, but I must acknowledge, Saïd, that one or two things occurred at your birth which astonished even me. It rained and thundered the whole day, and the sky was so black, that one could not read anything without a light. But about four o'clock in the afternoon, I was told that a little boy had been born to me. I hurried to the suite of rooms occupied by your mother, in order to see my firstborn and to bless him, but all her maidens stood before her door, and, in answer to my questions, told me that no one might enter the room, because Zemira, your mother, had made them all go outside, as she wished to be alone. I knocked at the door, but in vain ; it remained locked.

“ As I was standing, in some indignation, among the maidens at the door, the sky cleared with a suddenness such as I had never seen before, and the most wonderful thing of all was, that a clear piece of blue sky appeared over our dear town of Balsora, though all around the clouds lay rolled back in dense black masses, among which the lightning flashed and quivered. While I was still watching this scene with feelings of lively curiosity, my wife's door burst open. I left the girls waiting outside, and stepped into the room alone, to ask your mother why she had locked herself in. As I entered, such a pungent scent of roses, carnations, and hyacinths filled my nostrils that I felt almost intoxicated. Your mother led me forward, and, pointing to a tiny silver whistle which was tied round your neck with a golden chain as fine as a thread of silk, she said : ‘ That kind woman about whom I once told you has been here ; she brought this as a present for your boy.’ ‘ So that was the old witch who made the weather fine, and left this scent of roses and carnations behind

her ?' I said, with incredulous laughter. 'But she might have given him something better than this little whistle—a bag of gold, or a horse, or something of that kind.' Your mother adjured me not to mock, because the fairy was easily angered, and might change her blessing into a curse.

"I did as I was bid, in order to please her, and because she was ill. We never spoke again of this strange incident until six years later, when she felt that, young as she was, she was about to die. Then she handed the little whistle over to me, and commissioned me to give it to you when you were twenty years old, but not an hour earlier. She died. Here, then, is your present," continued Benezar, producing from a little case a tiny silver whistle on a long gold chain, "and I am giving it to you in your eighteenth instead of in your twentieth year because you are going away, and before you return I may have been gathered to my fathers. I see no real reason why you should stay here for two years more, as your anxious mother wished. You are a good, sensible lad, and can handle your weapons as well as anyone of four and twenty, so that to-day I can declare you to be of age with quite as much truth as if you were already twenty. And now depart in peace—and in sorrow (from which God will preserve you) and in joy always remember your father."

Thus spake Benezar of Balsora as he took leave of his son. Deeply moved, Saïd said farewell, hung the chain round his neck, stuck the little whistle in his girdle, swung himself on to his horse, and rode to the meeting-place of the caravan to Mecca. In a short time some eighty camels and many hundred riders had assembled together ; the caravan started off at a march, and Saïd rode out of the gate of Balsora, his

native town, which he was not to see again for many a long day.

The novelty of a journey of this kind, and the many strange objects which thrust themselves upon his notice, distracted him for a time; but when they got nearer to the desert, and their surroundings became barer and more desolate, he began to meditate over many things, and especially over the words with which his father, Benezar, had taken leave of him.

He took out the little whistle, looked at it from every side, and at last stuck it into his mouth, in order to find out whether it had a good, clear tone, but, behold! it made no sound. He inflated his cheeks, and blew with all his might, but he could not produce a single note, and, annoyed at such a useless present, he thrust the little whistle back into his girdle. Soon all his thoughts were concentrated on his mother's mysterious words. He had heard many things about fairies, but never had he known of any of his neighbours at Balsora being in communication with some supernatural genius. On the contrary, the legends about such spirits had always taken place in far-away countries, in times long past, and so he had thought that nowadays there were no longer such apparitions, or at least that fairies had ceased to visit human beings, or to concern themselves about their fate. Although this was the opinion he was inclined to hold, he was, at the same time, often tempted to believe in the existence of mysterious and supernatural beings because of what his mother had experienced, and thus it came to pass that he sat almost the whole day on his horse like one in a dream, neither joining in the conversation of his fellow-travellers, nor heeding their songs nor their laughter,

Saïd was a very handsome youth ; his eyes were bright and fearless, his mouth full of charm, and, young as he was, there was a certain dignity about his whole person such as one does not often find in boys of his age, and the grace with which he lightly but firmly sat on his horse, adorned with all the finery of warfare, attracted the notice of all his fellow-travellers. An old man who happened to be riding at his side, was much pleased by his appearance, and tried to sound him by many questions. Saïd, who had always been taught respect towards old age, answered modestly, but intelligently and with discrimination, so that the old man was filled with joy. But, as the lad's mind was engrossed the whole day by only one subject, it naturally happened that the conversation turned towards the mysterious realm of fairies, and at last Saïd frankly asked the old man whether he believed that fairies, either in the way of good or wicked spirits, existed and protected or persecuted mankind.

The old man stroked his beard, nodded his head pensively, and then said : " One cannot deny that such stories are rife, although up to this day I have neither seen a dwarf in the way of a spirit nor a giant in the shape of a genius, neither a sorcerer nor a fairy." The old man then started off, and told the young fellow so many and wonderful stories, that he felt quite giddy, and became convinced that everything which had heralded his birth, the change in the weather, and the sweet scent of roses and hyacinths, was of great and happy significance, and that he himself was under the special protection of a powerful and kind fairy, who had given the whistle for no other reason, than that he might be able to summon her in time of need. He dreamed all night of castles, magic horses, genii and

such like persons, and lived in a veritable kingdom of fairies.

Unfortunately, he was doomed next day to learn how futile were all his dreams, either waking or sleeping. The caravan had been proceeding at its usual pace for the greater part of the day, when a dark shadow was observed on the farther edge of the desert: some took it to be a sandheap, others thought it was a mass of clouds, others again held it to be another caravan; but the old man, who had made many journeys in his life, cried with a loud voice, and told them to beware, for it was a horde of Arab brigands who were approaching. The men seized their weapons, the women and the baggage were placed in the centre, and all preparations were made for an attack. The dense mass moved slowly across the plain, and looked like a flock of storks when they migrate to foreign shores. They gradually increased their pace, and hardly had it become possible to distinguish the men and their lances, when they stormed forward with the speed of the wind, and charged the caravan.

The men defended themselves bravely, but the brigands were over four hundred strong, and surrounded them on every side, killing them at first from a distance, and then making an attack with lances. In this awful moment Saïd, who had been fighting valiantly in the forefront of the battle, remembered his whistle, and, quickly drawing it out, he put it in his mouth, and blew, but he dropped it as quickly, for it did not produce the slightest sound. Furious at this bitter disappointment, he took aim, and shot an Arab, who was distinguished from the others by his magnificent raiment, through the breast; he swayed backwards, and fell from his horse.

"Allah! what have you done, young man?" cried the old man at his side. "Now we are all lost!" And so it appeared, for directly the brigands saw this man fall they set up an awful cry, and precipitated themselves with such fury against their antagonists, that the few remaining men who were not yet wounded were speedily scattered. In one second Saïd saw himself surrounded by five or six of his enemies. He wielded his lance so efficaciously that no one dared to approach nearer to him; at last one of them reined in his horse, fixed an arrow to his bow, took aim, and was just about to let it fly when another one signed to him to stop. The young man had just gathered all his strength together for a fresh attack, when an Arab threw a noose over his head without his being aware of it, and although he struggled to break the rope it was all in vain, for the noose was drawn tighter and tighter, and Saïd was taken prisoner.

At last the caravan was entirely cut up or taken captive, and the Arabs, who were not all of one tribe, divided the prisoners and the spoils, and then went on their way, some of them towards the south, the others to the east. Four armed men rode at Saïd's side, glancing at him from time to time in bitter hatred, and now and then flinging curses at his head; he concluded that it was a man of high rank, possibly their prince, whom he had killed. The slavery which lay before him would be even harder to endure than death; consequently he hoped, with a feeling of quiet happiness, that he had incurred the wrath of the whole band to such an extent that he would be put to death in their camp. His escort watched his every movement, and whenever he looked round, they menaced him with their spears; but once when one of their horses stumbled,

he turned his head quickly, and to his great joy caught sight of the old man who had been his fellow-traveller, and whom he had believed to be among the dead.

Eventually trees and tents came in sight in the distance. When they got near, a whole swarm of women and children advanced to meet them, but after exchanging a few words with the brigands, they broke out into a fearful wailing, and, looking at Saïd, they shook their fists at him with horrible curses. "He it is," they cried, "who has killed great Almansor, the bravest of all men. He shall die, and we will give his flesh to be the spoils of the jackal in the desert." Then they rushed at Saïd in such frenzy, flinging at him pieces of wood, clods of earth, and whatever else came to hand, that even the brigands had to intervene. "Off with you, children, get away, you women!" they shouted, scattering the crowd with their lances. "He has smitten great Almansor in the fight, and he must die, though not at the hand of a woman, but by the sword of the valiant."

When they reached an open space among the tents they made a halt, the prisoners were bound together in couples, and the booty was carried into the tent, but Saïd was fettered by himself, and led into a large tent. There sat an old man, in magnificent raiment, whose solemn and haughty manner showed that he was the chief of this band. The men in charge of Saïd entered with sad countenances and bowed heads. "The wailing of the women tells me what has happened," said the majestic man, looking at each of the brigands in turn; "your faces confirm it: Almansor has fallen."

"Almansor has fallen," answered the men; "but here, Selim, Ruler of the Desert, is his murderer, and

we bring him to you that you may judge him. Shall we shoot at him from afar with arrows, shall we hound him through a hedge of lances, or is it your will that he should be strung up on a rope, or torn to pieces by horses ? ”

“ Who are you ? ” asked Selim, looking gloomily at the prisoner, who, though prepared to die, stood before him with courageous bearing.

Saïd answered him briefly, and frankly.

“ Did you put an end to my son in a treacherous manner ? Did you pierce him from behind with an arrow or lance ? ”

“ No, my lord,” answered Saïd ; “ I killed him in open fight, in a front attack upon our lives, because he had already shot down eight of my companions before my eyes.”

“ Is it true what he says ? ” Selim asked of the men who had taken him prisoner.

“ Yes, my lord ; he killed Almansor in open fight,” said one of those questioned.

“ Then he has done no more and no less than we ourselves should have done,” answered Selim. “ He has fought and vanquished his foe, who wished to rob him of his freedom and his life, therefore quickly unloose his chains.”

The men looked at him in astonishment, and obeyed him in a dilatory and unwilling fashion. “ Shall the murderer of your son, brave Almansor, not die, then ? ” asked one of them, glancing at Saïd in fury. “ It would have been better had we put an end to him at once ! ”

“ He shall not die ! ” cried Selim. “ And I am even going to receive him into my tent : I claim him as my rightful share of the spoil. He shall be my servant.”

Saïd could find no words with which to thank the

old man. The men, however, left the tent grumbling, and when they communicated the venerable Selim's decision to the women and children, who were waiting outside to hear Saïd's sentence, there was a fearful wailing and shouting, and they cried that they would avenge themselves on the murderer for Almansor's death, as his own father would not exercise his revenge for blood.

The rest of the prisoners were divided among the band: some were released in order that they might procure a ransom for the richer ones, others were sent to serve as shepherds among the flocks, while many, who had formerly had ten slaves to wait upon them, were now obliged to do the lowest work in the camp. Not so Saïd. Was it his fearless, heroic appearance, or the mysterious spell of the kind fairy, which had attracted Selim to the youth? No one could say; but Saïd lived more as a son than a servant in his tent. The old man's inexplicable affection for him aroused the enmity of the other servants. He encountered hostile glances at every turn, and if he went alone through the camp he heard reproaches and curses flung at him from all sides; in fact, several times arrows, which were evidently aimed at him, flew past his chest, and he felt the little whistle had something to do with the fact that he was never hit; for he carried it always in his bosom, and was convinced that it was to that he owed his safety. He often complained to Selim about these attacks; but it was in vain that the latter attempted to discover the treacherous assassin, the whole band seemed to be allied against this foreign favourite. One day Selim said to him: "I had hoped that you would perhaps take the place of the son who fell by your hand. It is not your fault nor mine that this is not

to be ; every one seems embittered against you, and I can offer you no further protection in the future, for what good would it do you or me to punish the guilty once you have been secretly murdered ? Therefore when the men return from their expedition, I shall say that your father has sent me a ransom, and shall have you escorted across the desert by one or two faithful men."

" But can I trust anyone except you ? " asked Saïd uneasily. " Will they not murder me on the way ? "

" The oath which they have to swear to me, and which has never yet been broken, shall protect you from that," answered Selim, with calm assurance.

A few days later the men returned to the camp, and Selim kept his promise. He presented the lad with weapons, raiment, and a horse, and assembling his warlike men he selected five of them to be Saïd's escort, and making them take a solemn oath that they would not kill him, he released him with tears.

The five men rode in gloomy silence through the desert. The lad noticed how unwillingly they executed their commission, and it troubled him not a little that two of them had been present at the battle at which he had killed Almansor. When they had put some eight leagues behind them Saïd heard them whispering to one another, and noticed that they looked even more sullen than before. He strained his ears to hear what they were saying, and observed that they were conversing in a language only known to this tribe, and seldom used except on expeditions of great secrecy and danger ; Selim, when he had intended always to have the young man with him in his tent, had devoted several hours to teaching him these mysterious phrases ; but it was nothing very pleasant which he now heard.

"This is the place," one of them was saying. "It was here we attacked the caravan, and here fell the bravest man in the world, by the hand of a boy."

"The wind has worn away the tracks of his horse," continued the other, "but I have not forgotten it."

"And to our shame, shall this man still live and be free who laid hands upon him? Who has ever heard of a father who did not revenge the death of his only son? But Selim is getting old and childish."

"And if the father neglects his duty," said a fourth, "it then devolves on the friends to avenge their fallen comrade. Here, on this spot, we will hew him to pieces, for justice and tradition have so ordained since pre-historic times."

"But we have sworn to the old man," cried a fifth. "We ought not to kill him, we must not break our oath."

"That is true," said the others. "We have sworn; so the murderer must go free out of the hands of his enemies."

"Stop!" cried one of them, who looked the most forbidding of them all. "Old Selim is a clever fellow, but not so clever as all that. Have we sworn to take this lad anywhere? No; he only made us take an oath concerning his life, and that we will give him. But the burning sun, and the jackal's sharp teeth will undertake our revenge. We will leave him bound, here, on this spot." Thus spoke the brigand; but in the last few minutes, Said had determined on a desperate course, and while these words were being uttered, he set spurs to his horse, and, urging it forward with a sharp cut, he flew off across the plain like a bird. The five men were paralysed with astonishment for a moment, but,

well versed in the art of giving chase, they speedily separated, and pursued him to the right and to the left, and as they knew best how and where to ride in the desert, two of them had soon overtaken the fugitive, and swept round to cut off his retreat, and as he made a bolt to one side he encountered two more of his enemies, while the fifth was at his back. Their oath not to kill him restrained them from using their weapons. They once more threw a noose over his head from behind, dragged him from his horse, beat him unmercifully, and then bound him hand and foot, and laid him down in the burning sand of the desert.

Saïd besought them to have mercy on him. He promised them, in his terror, a huge ransom, but they merely swung themselves on to their horses with a laugh, and galloped away. He listened for a few moments to the fleet footsteps of their horses, and then gave himself up for lost. He thought of his father, and of the old man's sorrow when his son returned no more ; he thought of his own wretched fate at having to die so young ; for he was convinced of nothing more fully than that he was doomed to the lingering death of a martyr in that hot sand, or that he would be torn to pieces by a jackal. The sun rose higher and higher, and shone with a burning heat on his head. With an enormous effort he succeeded in turning over, but it afforded him but little alleviation. The little whistle had fallen out of his girdle in his struggles. He made frantic attempts to reach it with his mouth ; at last his lips touched it, and he tried to blow, but even in this awful hour of need it refused to make any response. He let his head fall back in despair, and eventually the piercing sunshine robbed him of his senses, and he fell into a state of complete stupor.

Saïd was awakened after many hours by a noise close to him ; then he felt a touch on his shoulder, and a cry of horror escaped him, for he felt sure that a jackal had come to tear him to pieces. He was next clasped by his legs, but he now felt that it was not the claws of a beast of prey which were clutching him but the hands of a man, who was dealing with him with great care, and speaking to two or three other people. "He is alive," they whispered, "but he thinks we are enemies."

At last Saïd opened his eyes, and saw above him the face of a short, fat man, with small eyes and a long beard. The latter spoke to him very kindly, helped him on to his legs, gave him something to eat and drink, and told him, while he refreshed himself, that he was a merchant from Bagdad, named Kalum-Bek, and a trader in shawls and fine veils for women. He had made a business tour, and was on his return journey home, when he had seen Saïd lying in such a wretched plight, and more dead than alive, in the sand. His magnificent dress and the flashing jewels in his dagger, had attracted the merchant's attention. He had used every means to restore him to life, and his efforts had been attended with success. The lad thanked him for his life, for he realised clearly that, without the intervention of this man, he must have come to a miserable end ; and as he had neither the means to continue his journey nor wished to wander alone through the desert, he gratefully accepted a seat on one of the merchant's heavily-laden camels, and determined at anyrate to go with him to Bagdad, where he hoped to be able to join some party journeying to Balsora.

On the way the merchant told his companion a great

deal about that most excellent ruler of the faithful, Haroun Al Raschid. He described to him his love of justice, and his power of discernment, and told him how this extraordinary man could decide the most complicated lawsuits in the simplest and most wonderful manner ; among others, he related to him the story of the ropemaker, and the story of the pot of olives—tales which every child knows, but which greatly aroused Saïd's admiration. "Our master, the Ruler of the Faithful," continued the merchant, "is a wonderful man. If you imagine that he sleeps like other people you are much mistaken. Two or three hours towards dawn is all he takes. I must be right, for Messour, his chief gentleman-in-waiting, is my cousin, and though he is as silent as the grave concerning his master's secrets, he sometimes lets his dearest relations have a peep behind the scenes when he sees that they are almost mad with curiosity. So, instead of going to sleep like other people, the Caliph slinks at night through the streets of Bagdad, and he seldom goes a week without coming in for some adventure or other ; for you must know, as one gathers so clearly from the story of the pot of olives, which is as true as the word of the Prophet, that he does not make these rounds in state, on horseback, with an escort and torchbearers, which he might do if he liked, but sometimes he dresses himself as a merchant, sometimes as a sailor ; one night he will wander about disguised as a soldier, the next night as a mufti, and will see if everything is as it should be.

"Consequently there is no town where people are so courteous to any beggar they may happen to meet as they are in Bagdad, for it might quite as well be the Caliph, as some dirty Arab out of the desert, and

there is wood enough in the world to bastinado everyone in and for miles round Bagdad."

Thus spake the merchant, and Saïd, although he was sometimes much troubled by a longing to get home to his father, was glad that he would soon see Bagdad and the famous Haroun Al Raschid.

After ten days they arrived at Bagdad, and the magnificence of this town, which in those days was at the height of its splendour, filled Saïd with astonishment and admiration. The merchant invited him into his house, and Saïd accepted with pleasure, for not till he came among the crowd of people did it occur to him that only the air he breathed, the water of the Tigris, and a night's rest on the steps of some mosque, could be had here for nothing.

The day after his arrival, when he had just dressed himself, and was thinking that he could quite well appear in the streets of Bagdad in this superb and warlike attire, and would very likely attract a great deal of notice, the merchant came into his room. He gazed at the handsome youth with a roguish smile, and said, stroking his beard : " That is all very fine, young gentleman ; but what is going to happen to you now ? It seems to me you are a great dreamer, and take no thought for the morrow ; or have you enough money with you to enable you to live up to your magnificent apparel ? "

" Dear Master Kalum-Bek," said the youth, blushing with some embarrassment, " I have certainly no money, but, perhaps, you would advance me something for my journey home ; my father will, of course, repay you at once."

" Your father, my lad ? " cried the merchant, with a loud laugh. " I think the sun has affected your

brain. Do you imagine that I believe a word of that fairy story which you told me in the desert about your father being a rich man in Balsora, and you his only son, and the attack from the Arabs; your life in the band, and this, that, and the other? Even then I was annoyed at your barefaced lies and your impudence. I know all the rich people in Balsora are merchants, and I have often done business with them all, and must have heard of one Benezar, even if he had only six thousand tomans' worth of goods. It is, therefore, either a lie that you came from Balsora, or your father is a poor beggar, to whose lad I have no intention of lending so much as a copper coin. So much for the attack in the desert! When has one ever heard, since the wise Caliph Haroun has protected the trade routes through the desert, of brigands daring to plunder a caravan, and even to kidnap people? Besides, it would have been made known all along my route; even here in Bagdad, where people come together from all parts of the world, it has never been mentioned. That is the second lie, you impertinent young fellow!"

Pale with anger and indignation Saïd tried to interrupt the malicious little man, but the latter shouted louder than he did, and also enforced his meaning with gesticulations. "And the third lie, you insolent liar, is the story about Selim's camp. Selim's name is well known by all who have ever set eyes on an Arab; but Selim is renowned as the most terrible and cruel of all the brigands, and you have the face to tell me that you killed his son and were not hewn to pieces yourself! Why, you go so far in your impudence that you even say things which it is impossible to believe. Selim protected you from the band—did he!—received you

into his own tent, and released you without any ransom, instead of stringing you up on the nearest suitable tree—he who has often hanged travellers just in order to see what faces they made when they were strung up! Oh, you abominable liar!”

“I can do no more,” cried the youth, “than declare by my soul and by the beard of the Prophet that it is all true.”

“What! you will swear by your soul,” screamed the merchant—“by your black, lying soul? And who will believe that? And by the beard of the Prophet—you, who have no beard yourself? Who would trust that?”

“It is true I have no proof,” continued Saïd; “but did you not find me in a wretched plight, and bound hand and foot?”

“That proves nothing,” he returned; “you are dressed like a prosperous brigand, and it might easily have happened that you had attacked someone stronger than yourself, who overcame you, and left you bound.”

“I do not believe that there is anyone in the world, certainly not two people in the world, who could overthrow me, and bind me hand and foot, unless a noose were thrown over my head from behind,” answered Saïd. “You, of course, in your bazaar, can have no knowledge of what feats are possible to a man who is practised in wielding arms. But you saved my life, and I thank you. What are you going to do to me now? If you do not give me any assistance I shall have to beg, and nothing shall induce me to ask a favour of any human being; I shall seek help from the Caliph.”

“Really?” said the merchant, with a scornful smile.

“ You will seek help from no one but our most gracious lord ? That is what I call begging in grand style. Tut, tut ! Just reflect a moment, my high and mighty young gentleman, that the way to the Caliph is through my cousin Messour, and, in one word, I can draw the lord chamberlain’s attention to the fact that you are a first-rate liar. But I pity your youth, Saïd. You may improve, and we may make something out of you yet. I will take you into my shop in the bazaar, where you shall have a year in my service, and if at the end of that time you still do not wish to stay with me, I will pay you your wages, and let you go where you will—to Aleppo or Medina, to Stambul, to Balsora, or to the dogs, as far as I am concerned. I will give you till midday to think that over ; if you agree, well and good ; if not, I shall calculate the cost of your journey and the seat on one of my camels at a low rate, shall refund myself with your clothes and everything that you have, and thrust you out into the street ; then you can beg from the Caliph, or the Mufti, at the mosque or in the bazaar.”

With these words the unkind man left the unhappy lad. Saïd’s eyes followed him with an expression of contempt, so enraged was he at the wickedness of this man, who had purposely taken him with him, and persuaded him to come into his house, that he might get him into his power. He tried to see if he could escape, but the window was barred and the doors locked. At last, after cudgelling his brains for a long time to find some other way out of the difficulty, he resolved, in the first place, to accept the merchant’s proposal, and serve in his shop. He realised that there was nothing else to be done, for, even if he made his escape, he could not get to Balsora without money.

But he determined to seek the protection of the Caliph himself as soon as possible.

The next day Kalum-Bek took his new servant down to his booth in the bazaar. He showed Saïd all the shawls and veils and other articles in which he traded, and told him what was to be his special work. Divested of his warlike apparel, and dressed like a shopboy, Saïd's task consisted in standing at the entrance to the booth with a shawl in one hand and a magnificent veil in the other, and in calling out the price of his wares as he exposed them to the view of the passers-by, inviting everyone to buy. And now Saïd understood why Kalum-Bek had especially selected him for this post: the merchant was a hideous little old man; therefore when he stood himself in his shop and called attention to his wares, many of his neighbours or some stray passer-by would let fly a jest at his expense, or the boys mocked at him, and the women called him a scarecrow; but it was a pleasure to everyone to look at a slim young fellow like Saïd, who had such a pleasant way of calling out to the customers, holding the shawls and veils so gracefully and to such advantage.

When Kalum-Bek saw that his customers had increased since Saïd stood at the door he became more considerate to the young man, fed him better, and took pains to dress him worthily in handsome apparel. But Saïd was not greatly moved by these proofs of an increasing kindness in his master's attitude towards him; he racked his brains all day, and even in his dreams, to find some good and feasible plan by which he might return to his native town.

One day the sale had been very brisk in the shop, and all the errand-boys who took the things to their

destination had already been sent out, when a woman came, and bought something more. She had soon selected her goods, and then asked if there were anyone who would carry them home for her for a small sum. "In half-an-hour I can send it all for you," answered Kalum-Bek; "till then you must possess your soul in patience or else take another messenger."

"Are you a shopkeeper, and yet you allow your customers to pick up any stray errand-boy out of the street?" cried the woman. "Might not a boy of that kind run off with my parcels in the crowd? And what should I do then? No; according to business laws it is your duty to provide someone to take my parcels home, and I have every right to insist upon it, and every intention of doing so."

"But if you would only wait half-an-hour, gracious lady," said the merchant, getting more and more agitated; "all my errand-boys have been sent out."

"It is a bad shop if there are not always a few boys to spare," answered the angry woman. "But there is still another of those young lazybones. Come here, boy; take my parcel, and follow me."

"Stop! stop!" screamed Kalum-Bek, "that is my signboard, my hawker, my magnet; he cannot leave this threshold!"

"What next?" returned the old lady, thrusting her parcel under Saïd's arm without more ado. "This must be a bad shopkeeper, and these miserable goods, which are not a sufficient guarantee in themselves, but need a lazy rogue like this to advertise them. Get on, get on, my lad; you shall earn an extra wage to-day."

"Well, be off, in the name of Ahriman, and of all evil spirits," muttered Kalum-Bek to his "magnet."

"And mind you come back at once; the old witch would bring me into disrepute with the whole bazaar were I to resist her any longer."

Saïd followed the woman, who hurried through the market and down the street with a fleeter step than one would have supposed possible at her age. She stopped eventually before a magnificent house, and knocked; the folding doors flew open, and, ascending the marble steps, she made a sign to Saïd to follow her. At last they reached a large, high room decorated with more magnificence and splendour than Saïd had ever seen. There the old woman sat down on a divan in a state of exhaustion, made a sign to the young man to deposit his parcel, and, handing him a small piece of silver, told him to go.

He had got as far as the door, when a clear, small voice called: "Saïd!" He looked round, astonished that anyone should know him here, and a wonderfully beautiful lady, surrounded by a number of servants and slaves, sat on the divan in the place of the old woman. Saïd crossed his arms, and made a low bow in dumb amazement.

"Saïd, my dear lad," said the lady, "much as I regret the misfortune which brought you to Bagdad, you must know that this is the only place appointed by your fate where, if you left your father's house before your twentieth year, your destiny could unravel itself. Saïd, have you your little whistle still?"

"Of course I have it still," he cried, producing the gold chain; "and maybe you are the kind fairy who gave me this present when I was born?"

"I was your mother's friend," answered the fairy, "and I am your friend too as long as you are good. Oh! if your father, foolish man, had only followed

my advice ! You would then have escaped many troubles."

"Well, it had to be !" replied Saïd. "But, most gracious lady, can you not harness a mighty north-east wind to your chariot of clouds ; then you could take me up, and convey me in a few minutes to my father at Balsora ? I would wait there quite patiently for six months, till I am twenty."

The fairy smiled. "You have a happy way of speaking to us," she answered ; "but, my poor Saïd, it is not possible ; now that you are away from your father's house I cannot do anything miraculous for you. I cannot free you from the power of that wretched Kalum-Bek ; he is under the protection of your mighty enemy."

"So I have not only a kind friend," asked Saïd, "but an enemy also ? Well, I think I often felt her influence before now. But surely you can still help me with your advice ? Shall I not go to the Caliph, and beg for his protection ? He is a wise man, and will protect me against Kalum-Bek."

"Yes ; Haroun is a wise man," answered the fairy, "but, unfortunately, he is only human. He trusts his lord chamberlain, Messour, as if he were himself, and he may well do so, for he has proved Messour, and found him true. Messour, however, trusts his friend Kalum-Bek also as if he were himself, and he is mistaken in that, for Kalum-Bek is a wicked man, although he is Messour's relation. At the same time, Kalum is a cunning fellow, and as soon as he arrived here he told his cousin, the lord chamberlain, some fictitious story about you, with which you will be henceforth branded, and this was repeated to the Caliph, so that if you went straight to Haroun's palace

now you would get a bad reception, for he would not believe in you. There are, however, other ways and means of approaching him, and it is written in your stars that you shall win his favour."

"Well, that is a bad business," said Saïd mournfully; "so I shall still have to serve some time longer as shopboy to that wretched Kalum-Bek. One favour, however, honoured fairy, you might grant me. I have been trained to feats of arms, and my greatest joy is a good, hard fencing bout with lances, bows, and blunt swords. Now, in this town all the lads of the nobility meet every week for tournaments of this kind. But only people who are most handsomely apparelled, and above all only *free* men, may ride in the lists, which are especially closed to anyone who serves in the bazaar. If you could only manage that I should have clothes, weapons, and a horse every week, and that my face might not be so easily recognised——"

"That is a wish worthy of a noble young man," said the fairy. "Your mother's father was the bravest man in Syria, and his spirit seems to have descended upon you. Remember this house; every week you shall find here a horse and two mounted esquires, as well as weapons, clothes, and a lotion for your face which shall make it impossible for anyone to recognise you. Now, Saïd, farewell! Have patience, be prudent and virtuous! In six months your whistle shall sound, and Zulima's ear will be listening for its note."

The youth parted from his wonderful protectress with every expression of gratitude and veneration. He committed the exact position of the house and street to memory, and then returned to the bazaar. He reached it just in time to lend his lord and master, Kalum-Bek, his support, and to save him from a fearful

predicament. A dense crowd surrounded the shop, boys were dancing round the merchant and mocking at him, while the older ones looked on, and laughed. He himself was standing, in great embarrassment, and trembling with fury, at the entrance to his shop, a shawl in one hand, a veil in the other. This strange scene had been caused by an incident which had occurred in Saïd's absence. Kalum had taken up his position at the door, in the place of his handsome servant, and had begun hawking his wares, but no one wished to buy from that hideous old fellow. Two men had gone down to the bazaar with the intention of buying presents for their wives; they had walked from end to end a couple of times, searching for what they wanted, and were then seen strolling down the bazaar once more, looking from side to side.

Kalum-Bek, remarking this, and wishing to turn it to his advantage, called out: "Here, gentlemen, here! What do you want? Beautiful shawls, beautiful wares?"

"My good man," answered one of them, "your goods may be of the very best, but our wives have their fancies, and it has become the custom in the town to buy veils from no one but Saïd, the handsome shop-boy; we have already been wandering round for half-an-hour looking for him, but have not found him. If, however, you can tell us where we shall come across him we will buy from you another time."

"Allahit Allah!" cried Kalum-Bek, with a friendly grin. "The Prophet has brought you to the right door. You wanted to go to the handsome shopboy for your veils, did you? Well, step inside, this is his booth."

One of the men laughed at Kalum's small and hideous

figure and at his declaration that the handsome shop-boy was to be found here ; the other, however, thinking that Kalum meant to make sport of him, abused him roundly, and in no measured terms. Kalum-Bek then lost his temper. He called his neighbours to witness that no other shop was called the booth of the handsome shopboy, but his neighbours, who grudged him the brisk sale he had had of late, denied all knowledge of it, and the two men now fell upon the old liar, as they called him. Kalum defended himself more by screaming and reviling than with his fists, and in this way he attracted a large number of people to his booth. The greater part of the town knew him to be a vulgar, niggardly old miser, and all the onlookers were glad to see him getting a good thrashing. One of the men had just clutched hold of his beard, when he was seized in his turn by the arm, and, with one thrust, hurled to the ground, so that his turban fell off, and his slippers flew far away.

The crowd, who evidently would have been glad if Kalum-Bek had been ill used, now loudly expressed its disapproval, and the unhappy man's companion looked round to see who had dared to throw his friend. When he perceived a tall, powerful youth standing before him, with flashing eyes and an expression of utter fearlessness, he did not dare to lay hold on him, especially as Kalum, whose deliverance seemed like a miracle, pointed to him, crying : " There ! What more do you want ? There he is, gentlemen ! That is Saïd, the handsome shopboy." The onlookers laughed, for they saw that Kalum-Bek had been wronged. The fallen man picked himself up in a shamefaced manner, and limped away with his friend without purchasing either a shawl or a veil.

“ Oh, you star among shopboys, you are the jewel of the bazaar ! ” exclaimed Kalum, leading his servant into the shop. “ Truly, that is what I call coming at the right time ; that is what I call lending a helping hand. Why, you laid the fellow as flat on the ground as if he had never had a pair of legs to stand on ; and as for me, I should not have needed a barber to comb and anoint my beard any more if you had come only two minutes later. How can I reward you ? ”

It was only a sudden feeling of sympathy which had prompted Saïd's hand and heart. Now that the feeling had subsided, he was almost sorry to have spared the unkind man a thrashing ; a dozen less hairs in his beard, he thought, might have made him more gentle and amenable for twelve days or so ; nevertheless, he endeavoured to avail himself of the merchant's favourable attitude towards him, and begged his master to allow him, as a mark of gratitude, one evening in the week to himself for taking a walk or for amusing himself in any other way. Kalum consented to this, for he knew this boy whom he had forced into his service would be too sensible to attempt to escape without any money or decent clothes.

Saïd had soon attained what he wanted. On the following Wednesday, the day on which the young people of highest rank assembled for their military exercises in an open square in the town, he told Kalum that he should like to have the evening to himself, and having obtained leave he went to the street where the fairy lived, and the doors swung open at his knock. The servants seemed to have been already prepared for his arrival, for, without asking him what he wanted, they conducted him up the steps into a beautiful room ; there they first handed him the lotion which was to

make him unrecognisable. He bathed his face with it, and when he afterwards looked at himself in a mirror of polished metal he hardly knew himself, for he was now sunburnt, and had a lovely black beard, which made him appear ten years older than he really was.

He was then conducted into a second room, where he found a complete and gorgeous outfit, such as even the Caliph of Bagdad would not have been ashamed to wear on the day when, in the full glory of his magnificence, he had reviewed his troops. Besides a turban of the finest texture with a diamond clasp and a high plume, and a tunic of rich red silk embroidered with silver flowers, he found a breastplate of silver chain-armour, so finely wrought that it bent to every movement of his body, and yet was so strong that no lance or sword could penetrate it. His warlike attire was completed by a damascene sword in a richly-ornamented sheath, with a handle set with jewels, which Saïd observed to be of untold worth. As he stepped out of the door, fully equipped, a servant handed him a silk scarf, saying that the mistress of the house sent it to him, and that if he wiped his face with it his beard and dusky complexion would disappear.

Three beautiful horses stood in the courtyard of the house. Saïd mounted the best one, his servants the other two, and then he trotted off in great joy to the place where the tournament was to be held. The splendour of his clothes and the magnificence of his weapons attracted everybody's attention, and as he entered the lists a whisper of astonishment ran through the crowd which had gathered round the ring. It was a brilliant assembly of the bravest and noblest youths of Bagdad; even the brothers of the Caliph were there, exercising their horses and swinging their lances.

When Saïd arrived, as no one seemed to know him, the Great Vizier's son rode up to him, with one or two friends, and with a respectful greeting, invited him to join in their sport, and questioned him as to his name and his native country. Saïd gave out that his name was Almansor, and that he came from Cairo ; he said that, being on a journey, and having heard of the courage and prowess of the young nobles of Bagdad, he had not wished to miss the opportunity of seeing them, and of making their acquaintance. The young people were pleased by the whole bearing and valiant demeanour of Saïd-Almansor ; they handed him a lance and made him choose his side, for the whole company had divided themselves into two parties, so as to combat one another singly and together.

But if Saïd's appearance had attracted attention his extraordinary prowess and agility aroused even greater astonishment. His horse was as swift as a bird, and his sword seemed to move with even greater speed. He hurled his lance at the goal with as much ease and accuracy as if it had been an arrow which he had let fly from a trusty bow. He defeated the bravest of his antagonists, and at the end of the match, was so universally acknowledged as victor that one of the Caliph's brothers and the Grand Vizier's son who had fought on Saïd's side, begged him to challenge them. Ali, the Caliph's brother, was vanquished, but the Grand Vizier's son combated him so stoutly, that it was deemed best to postpone the final contest to the next time.

The day after this tournament, everyone in Bagdad was speaking of this handsome, rich, and valiant young stranger. All who had seen him, not excepting those whom he had defeated, were enraptured by his chival-

rous manners, and he even, with his own ears, heard himself discussed in Kalum-Bek's booth ; the only regret was that no one knew where he lived. He found next time in the fairy's house even lovelier apparel and more costly weapons. This time the half of Bagdad had assembled, and even the Caliph looked down on the scene from a balcony ; he also admired this young stranger, and when the match was ended, he hung a large gold medal, on a chain of gold, round his neck as a proof of his esteem. The second and yet more brilliant success could have no other result than to excite the envy of the young people of Bagdad. " Shall a stranger come to Bagdad," they said to each other, " and deprive us of fame, honour, and victory ? Shall he be allowed to boast elsewhere that among the finest of the lads of Bagdad he could find no one who was in any way a match for him ? " They talked in this fashion, and resolved at the next tournament to attack him, as if by accident, with a force of five or six.

These signs of displeasure did not escape Saïd's piercing glance ; he noticed how they congregated in corners, and talked in whispers, looking at him with angry faces ; he suspected that, except for the Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son, none of them could feel very kindly disposed towards him, and even his friends importuned him with questions as to where he was to be found, what was his profession, what had pleased him best in Bagdad, and so on.

It was a curious accident that the young man who contemplated Saïd-Almansor with the blackest looks, and seemed to harbour feelings of the greatest hatred against him, was none other but the man whom he had thrown down a short time before in Kalum-Bek's shop,

when the unhappy merchant was about to have his beard torn out. This man always watched him very attentively, and with his heart full of envy; he had already been defeated once or twice, but this was not sufficient reason for his intense enmity, and Saïd began to fear that he had been recognised by his stature or by his voice as Kalum-Bek's servant; the which discovery would be sure to expose him to the mockery and revenge of these people. The plot which his antagonists had devised for his ruin, failed as much owing to his own prudence and courage as to the friendship with which the Caliph's brother, and the Grand Vizier's son regarded him. When the latter saw that he was surrounded by at least six people, who were attempting to drag him from his horse and to disarm him, they flew to the rescue, scattered the whole band, and threatened to expel from the lists all those who had behaved in such a treacherous manner. Saïd had proved his courage after this fashion, to the amazement of Bagdad, for four months, when one evening, as he was on his way home from the tournament, he heard several voices which seemed to him familiar. Four men were walking in front of him, and seemed by their slow steps to be consulting about something. As Saïd approached them quietly he heard that they were speaking in the dialect which was used by Selim's tribe in the desert, so he suspected that these four were on some expedition of plunder. His first instinct prompted him to beat a hasty retreat, but then he bethought himself that he might be able to avert some mischief, so he crept nearer, in order to listen to what they were saying.

"The doorkeeper expressly said it was the street to the right of the bazaar," one of them was saying;

"he was bound to pass that way to-night with the Grand Vizier."

"All right," answered another. "I am not afraid of the Grand Vizier; he is old, and not much of a hero; but the Caliph is probably a good hand with a sword, and I would not trust him. I suppose ten or twelve of his bodyguard will be following in his tracks."

"No fear," replied a third; "whenever one has seen him or come across him by night, he has always been alone with the Vizier or that little lord chamberlain. We must get hold of him to-night, but no harm must happen to him."

"I think it would be best," said the first man, "to throw a noose over his head; we must not kill him, because we should get only a small ransom for his body, and, besides, we should not be sure of getting hold of it."

"An hour before midnight, then," they said all together, and parted company, some going one way some another.

Saïd was not a little horrified at this plot. He determined to go at once with all haste to the Caliph's palace, and inform him of the danger which menaced him. But when he had traversed several streets at full speed he remembered the words of the fairy, who had told him in what bad repute he was held by the Caliph; he recollected that his information might be laughed at, or that it might be thought that he wished by this means to ingratiate himself with the ruler of Bagdad, so he slackened his pace, and resolved that it would be best to rely on his good sword, and, by his personal intervention, to save the Caliph from the hands of the robbers.

He did not, therefore, return to Kalum-Bek's house,

but sat down on the steps of a mosque, and waited till night had completely fallen ; then, passing through the bazaar, he turned into the street described by the brigands, and hid behind the projecting corner of a house. He might have stood there about an hour, when he heard two men coming slowly down the street ; at first he thought it was the Caliph and his Grand Vizier, but one of the men snapped his fingers, and immediately two more came softly hurrying up the street from the direction of the bazaar. They held a whispered conversation for a few minutes, and then separated, three of them hiding not far from Saïd, while the fourth continued to walk up and down the street. The night was very dark, but still, and Saïd was obliged to rely almost entirely on the sharpness of his ears.

Another half-hour elapsed, and steps were once more heard from the direction of the bazaar. The brigand seemed also to have heard them ; he crept past Saïd towards the bazaar. The steps approached, and Saïd could just recognise several dark figures, when the brigand snapped his fingers, and at that moment the three others rushed out from their hiding-place. It appeared, however, that their antagonists were armed, for he next heard the ring of conflicting swords. He at once drew his damascene sabre, and rushed out, with the cry : " Down with the enemies of the great Haroun ! " and, killing one of the brigands with his first thrust, he fell upon the two others, who were just in the act of disarming a man, round whom they had thrown a noose. He struck blindly at the rope, in order to cut it, but dealt such a mighty blow on the arm of one of the brigands in so doing that he hacked off his hand ; the brigand fell to his knees with a horrible

cry. The fourth man, who had been fighting someone else, now turned against Saïd, who was still engaged in combating his third antagonist, but the man over whom the noose had been thrown was no sooner free than he drew his dagger and thrust it into his enemy's breast from the side. When the remaining brigand saw this, he threw away his sword, and fled.

Saïd was not long in uncertainty as to whom he had saved, for the taller of the two men advanced towards him, and said : "The last part of this adventure is as strange as the first; this attack on my liberty or my life is as incomprehensible as your providential help and my deliverance. How did you know who I was? Were you aware of this plot?"

"Ruler of the Faithful," answered Saïd, "for I do not doubt that you are he, I walked this evening along the street called El Malek behind some men whose foreign and secret dialect I once learnt. They were talking of making you a prisoner and of killing that worthy man, your Vizier. As it was too late to warn you, I resolved to go to the place where they were lying in wait for you, in order to offer you assistance."

"Thank you," said Haroun; "but it won't do to stay here. Take this ring, and come to the palace with it to-morrow, then we will investigate further into this matter, and speak at more length of you and your assistance, and I will see how I can reward you. Come, Vizier, it will not do to linger; they might return."

When he had said this he wanted to take the Vizier away, after he had put the ring on the lad's finger, but the other begged him to wait a moment, and, turning round, handed a heavy purse to the astonished youth. "Young man," he said, "my lord the Caliph can make you anything he likes, and can even appoint

you my successor; I myself can do but little, and that which I can do is better done to-day than to-morrow, so take my purse. Nor shall that be the sum-total of my thanks. If ever you wish for anything come with confidence to me."

Saïd hurried home, almost intoxicated with happiness. But here he met with a bad reception. Kalum-Bek had been at first angry, then anxious, at his staying out so long, for he thought he might lose the beautiful signboard belonging to his shop. He received him with volumes of abuse, and stormed and raged as if he had taken leave of his senses. Saïd, however, had taken one peep into the purse, and had found that it contained pure gold pieces, so, reflecting that he could now travel home, even without the Caliph's favour, which was not likely to be of less value than his Vizier's gratitude, he did not mince matters, but told his master in plain language that he would not stay with him another hour. At first Kalum-Bek was much disturbed at this, but then he laughed scornfully, and said: "You ragamuffin, you tramp, you wretched wight, where are you going to flee to, then, if I withdraw my hand from you? Where will you get a bite to eat. Where will you find a night's lodging?"

"You won't have to worry about that, Master Kalum-Bek," answered Saïd defiantly. "Farewell, you won't see me again."

With these words he ran out of the door, and Kalum-Bek looked after him in speechless astonishment. The next morning, when he had well considered the matter, he sent out all his errand-boys, and told them to spy upon the runaway. They sought him for a long time in vain, but at last one of them came back, and reported that he had seen Saïd, the shopboy,

coming out of a mosque, and had watched him go into a caravansary.

When Kalum-Bek heard this he cried, with an oath : "He has robbed me, and bought himself clothes. Wretched man that I am !" Then he ran to the overseer of the police, and as it was known that he was related to Messour, the lord chamberlain, he had no difficulty in procuring a couple of men with whom to arrest Saïd. The latter was sitting in front of a caravansary, quietly discussing his journey to his native town of Balsora with a merchant whom he had found there, when suddenly two or three men fell upon him, and, in spite of his resistance, tied his hands together at his back. He asked them by whose authority they performed this act of violence, and they answered that they were acting in the name of the police and of his lawful master, Kalum-Bek. The hideous little man then immediately appeared, and, jeering and mocking at Saïd, he thrust his hand into the lad's pocket, and, to the astonishment of the onlookers, extracted, with a shout of triumph, a purse full of gold.

"Look ! He has gradually robbed me of all that, the villain !" he exclaimed, and everyone looked at the prisoner with horror, and cried : "What ! So young and handsome and yet so wicked ! Let him be tried ! let him be tried ! He will be sentenced to the bastinado." So they dragged him off, and an enormous procession of people of all ranks joined them, crying : "Look ! This is the handsome shopboy from the bazaar ; he has robbed his master, and taken to his heels ; he stole two hundred gold pieces !"

The overseer of the police received the prisoner in a forbidding manner. Saïd wanted to speak, but the officer commanded him to be silent, and only heard

the little merchant. He showed him the purse, and asked him if this gold had been stolen. Kalum-Bek swore to it, and his perjury certainly secured him the money, but not the handsome shopboy, who was worth a thousand gold pieces to him, for the judge said : " According to the law, which my most powerful lord the Caliph has only lately brought into stricter execution, any theft which exceeds a hundred gold pieces, and is perpetrated in the bazaar, shall be punished with perpetual exile on a desert island. This theft has been committed at precisely the right moment. He has completed the number to twenty boys ; to-morrow they will be packed into a boat, and shipped off to sea."

Saïd was in despair ; he adjured the officer to hear him, and to let him speak but one word with the Caliph ; but he found no mercy. Even Kalum-Bek, who now repented of his oath, put in a word for him, but the judge answered : " You have got your gold, so be content ; go home, and keep quiet, otherwise I shall fine you ten gold pieces for every prevarication." Kalum shut his mouth in great agitation, the judge made a sign, and the unhappy Saïd was led away.

He was taken into a dark, dank prison ; nineteen wretched people were lying about there on straw, and received him as their comrade with hoarse laughter, and curses against the judge and the Caliph. Awful as was the fate which lay before him, and fearful as was the thought of being banished to a desert island, it was yet some comfort to him to know that the following day he would be released from this horrible prison. But he was much deceived in thinking that he would fare better in the ship. The twenty criminals were thrown down into the lowest hold, where it was im-

possible to stand upright, and there they pushed and fought one another for the best places.

They weighed anchor, and Saïd wept bitter tears as the ship which was to take him farther away from his native land began to move. Small rations of bread and fruit, and a little sweet water, was served out to them only once a day, and it was so dark in the ship's hold, that lights had always to be brought down when the prisoners were fed. Almost every two or three days one of them was found dead, so unwholesome was the air in this water dungeon, and Saïd was only saved by his youth and his strong constitution.

They had already been a fortnight at sea, when one day the waves roared more loudly, and everyone on board seemed to be bustling about, and running hither and thither.

Saïd suspected that there was about to be a storm; he even found some pleasure in the thought, for he hoped then to die.

The ship rolled more and more, and eventually came to a standstill with a horrible crash. The sound of shouts and yells reached them from the upper deck, and mingled with the bellowing of the storm. At last everything became quieter, but at that moment one of the prisoners discovered that the water was pouring into the ship. They knocked at the trap-door above their heads, but there was no response. Then as the water was pouring in every moment with greater violence they all pressed against the door, and with their united strength forced it open.

They mounted the ladder, but not a soul did they find; the whole crew had saved themselves in boats. The greater number of the prisoners now gave way to despair, for the storm was raging always more violently;

the ship was gradually breaking up, and sinking. They sat on deck for some hours, and made their last meal from the provisions which they found on board ; then the storm suddenly increased, the ship was swept away from the cliff on which she had been wedged, and was shivered to pieces.

Saïd had climbed up to the masthead, and clung on there even when the ship split in half. The waves tossed him to and fro, but he managed to steer himself with his feet, and keep above water. He had been swimming for about half-an-hour, with always increasing danger to his life, when the chain with the little whistle fell once more out of his clothes, and he attempted yet again to make it produce some sound. Holding fast to the mast with one hand, he put it to his mouth with the other, and blew. It produced a shrill, clear note, and in a second the storm abated, and the waves became as smooth as if oil had been poured upon them. Hardly had he begun to breathe more freely, and to cast his eyes round in search of land, when the mast beneath him began to move and to spread itself out in a most extraordinary manner, and he was not a little horrified to find that he was no longer being swept along on a piece of wood but was riding on the back of an enormous dolphin. In a few minutes, however, he regained his self-control, and when he saw that the dolphin was swimming quietly and calmly through the water, though at a great speed, he ascribed his miraculous escape to the little silver whistle and the kind fairy, and shouted his most ardent thanks into the air.

His wonderful steed bore him through the waves with the speed of an arrow, and before it was evening he caught sight of land, and discerned a broad river,

into which the dolphin bent its course. Their progress was slower up stream, and in order that he should not faint with hunger, Saïd, with a dim recollection of the incantations in ancient fairy stories, took out his whistle, and, blowing a loud, vigorous note, wished for a good meal. The fish immediately stopped, and a table appeared out of the water, no more damp than if it had stood a week in the sun, and covered with the most delicious things to eat. Saïd set to work in earnest, for during his imprisonment his rations had been of the smallest and most wretched description, and when he was completely satisfied he pronounced his thanks. The table disappeared under water, and the dolphin, after receiving a kick in the flank, proceeded on his course up the stream.

The sun was already beginning to set when Saïd saw a large town in the far distance, whose minarets seemed to bear a great resemblance to those of Bagdad. The idea of Bagdad did not much please him, but he had such confidence in his kind fairy, that he was firmly convinced that she would not again let him fall into the hands of that scoundrel Kalum-Bek. About a mile from the town, he perceived to one side of him, and close to the river, a magnificent country house, and to his astonishment the fish steered in that direction.

Several beautifully-dressed men were standing on the roof, and Saïd saw a great number of servants on the bank, who were all gazing at him, and clapping their hands in amazement. The dolphin stopped at a flight of marble steps which led up to the palace from the water, and hardly had Saïd set foot on these steps than the fish vanished entirely. A few servants immediately hurried down towards him, and begged

him, in the name of their lord, to accompany him to the house, where they promised to provide him with some dry clothes. He quickly changed his wet things, and then followed the servants up to the roof, where he found three men, the tallest and most handsome of whom advanced towards him with a kind and gracious manner. "Who are you, wonderful stranger," he said; "you, who can tame the fishes of the sea, and guide them to the right and to the left as the equestrian does his charger? Are you a sorcerer or a human being like ourselves?"

"My lord," answered Saïd, "things have gone very badly with me during the last few weeks, but if it would afford you any pleasure I will tell you my story." Then he began at the beginning, and gave the three men an account of his adventures from the time he left his father's house up to the moment of his miraculous escape. They frequently interrupted him with exclamations of surprise and astonishment; but when he had finished, the master of the house, who had given him such a friendly reception, said: "I believe what you have told us, Saïd. But you were saying that you had won a chain in a bout of arms, and that the Caliph had given you a ring; can you show us these?"

"Here, against my heart, I have kept them both," said the youth, "and only with my life would I have relinquished such precious gifts, for I consider it to be the most glorious and sublime thing I have ever done to have rescued the great Kaliph from the hands of his murderers." With these words he produced the chain and the ring, and handed them both over to the men.

"By the beard of the Prophet, that is it! It is

my ring!" cried the tall, handsome man. "Grand Vizier, let us embrace him, for here stands our deliverer." Saïd felt as if he were dreaming when these two threw their arms round his neck, but the next moment he had prostrated himself to the earth, crying: "Pardon me, Ruler of the Faithful, for having spoken thus to you, for you are no other than Haroun Al Raschid, the great Caliph of Bagdad."

"I am he, your friend," answered Haroun, "and from this hour all your sad destiny shall change. Follow me to Bagdad, stay near me, and be one of the most trusted officials of my Court, for truly you have shown that you are not indifferent to the person of Haroun, and I would not like to put every one of my most loyal servants to the test you suffered that night!"

Saïd thanked the Caliph. He promised to stay with him for ever if he might first journey home to his father, who was probably in great anxiety concerning him, and the Caliph found this a just and reasonable demand. They soon mounted their horses, and reached Bagdad before sunset. The Caliph ordered that Saïd should have a large suite of sumptuously-furnished rooms set apart for his use in the palace, and promised as well to build him a house of his own.

The first rumour of this event brought Saïd's two old comrades in arms, the Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son, in great haste to the palace. They embraced him as the deliverer of these two beloved men, and begged him to be their friend. They were speechless with astonishment however, when he said: "That I have been for a long time," and, producing the chain which he had received as the prize of victory, he reminded them of this, that, and the other. They had only seen him with a dusky complexion and a

long beard, so it was only when he told them the reason of his disguise, and, calling for blunt weapons as a witness to the truth of his story, fought with them, to prove that he was Almansor the Brave ; it was only then, that they once more joyfully embraced him, and congratulated themselves on having such a friend.

The next day, as Saïd and the Grand Vizier were sitting with Haroun, Messour, the lord chamberlain, entered, and said : “ Ruler of the Faithful, if it be permitted, I should like to beg a favour of you.”

“ I will hear what you have to say,” answered Haroun.

“ My dear first cousin, Kalum-Bek, is outside, a famous merchant belonging to the bazaar,” he said ; “ he has been having some strange transactions with a man from Balsora, whose son was in his service, and subsequently committed a theft, and made off, no one knows where. Now the father is demanding Kalum to give up the boy, but my cousin has not got him. His desire is, however, and this is the favour that he begs of you, that you, by virtue of your great power of discernment and of your wisdom, should judge between this man from Aleppo and himself.”

“ I will be judge,” answered the Caliph. “ In half-an-hour, my lord, your cousin and his plaintiff may enter the judgment hall.”

When Messour had taken his departure, with many expressions of thanks, Haroun observed : “ That is none other but your father, Saïd, and, as I have happily now had an account of everything as it actually happened, I shall be able to judge like Solomon. You, Saïd, shall hide behind the curtain of my throne until I call you, and do you, Grand Vizier, send immediately to fetch that wicked and impetuous police magistrate ; I shall require him to give evidence.”

Both of them did as they were bid. Saïd's heart beat more loudly when he saw his pale and careworn father enter the Hall of Justice with tottering footsteps, and the crafty, self-satisfied smile with which Kalum-Bek whispered to his cousin, the lord chamberlain, made Saïd so furious that he longed to rush out at him from behind the curtain, for he had to thank this scoundrel for his most acute sufferings and most bitter sorrows.

There was a large number of people in the hall, who had assembled to hear the Caliph pronounce his sentence. When the Ruler of Bagdad had seated himself on his throne the Grand Vizier commanded that there should be silence, and asked who had appeared before his lord as plaintiff.

Kalum-Bek advanced with an insolent air, and said : "A few days ago I was standing at the entrance to my shop, hawking my wares, with a purse in my hand, when this man here at my side stepped into the booth, and exclaimed : 'A purse of gold for anyone who can give me information concerning Saïd of Balsora.' This Saïd had formerly been in my service, so I called out : 'This way, my friend ; I can earn that purse !' This man, who now bears such enmity towards me, was then most friendly, and asked what I knew about the matter. I replied : 'You must be his father, Benezar ?' And when he answered joyfully in the affirmative I related to him how I had found the young man in the desert, had rescued him, looked after him, and brought him to Bagdad. In the fulness of his heart he presented me with the purse, but when this foolish fellow heard the continuation of my story—how his son had remained in my service, and what a bad turn he had done me, robbing me, and then taking

to his heels—he refused to believe a word of it, and has been disputing the matter with me for many days, first commanding me to restore him his son, and then his money; but neither one nor the other can I do, because he owes me the money for the information I vouchsafed to him, and I am unable to produce his ill-mannered boy.”

Then it was Benezar’s turn to speak. He described how noble and virtuous his son was, and how he could never have been so wicked as to steal. He urged the Caliph to examine narrowly into the whole business.

“I hope,” said Haroun, “that you gave notice of the theft as you should have done, Kalum-Bek.”

“Why, of course,” he exclaimed, with a laugh; “I took him before the police magistrate.”

“Summon the police magistrate,” ordered the Caliph. To everyone’s astonishment this man appeared immediately, as if conveyed thither by magic. The Caliph asked him if he remembered this business, and he owned to some knowledge of it.

“Did you hear the young man’s defence? Did he plead guilty to the theft?” asked Haroun.

“No; he was so obstinate that he would confess to no one but yourself,” answered the magistrate.

“But I do not remember having seen him,” said the Caliph.

“Well, why should you? If I did that, I should have to send you a whole pack of these vagabonds, who wish to speak to you, every day.”

“You know that my ear is open to everyone,” answered Haroun; “but apparently the evidence of the theft was so clear, that it was not necessary to bring the young man into my presence. You, of course,

proved, Kalum-Bek, that the money which was stolen belonged to you ? ”

“ I proved it ? ” he repeated, turning pale. “ No, I had no proof; and you must know, Ruler of the Faithful, that one gold piece looks exactly like another. Whence could I get any proof that these particular gold pieces were missing from my cashbox ? ”

“ How did you know, then, that this sum just happened to belong to you ? ” asked the Caliph.

“ By the purse which contained them,” replied Kalum.

“ Have you the purse with you ? ” he further inquired.

“ Here it is,” said the merchant, producing a purse, and handing it to the Grand Vizier that he might give it to the Caliph.

But the Vizier exclaimed with feigned astonishment : “ By the beard of the Prophet ! you say the purse is yours, you dog ? This purse belonged to *me*, and I gave it, filled with a hundred gold pieces, to a fine young fellow who rescued me from great danger.”

“ Can you swear to that ? ” asked the Caliph.

“ With as much certainty as that I will one day go to Paradise,” answered the Vizier, “ for my daughter made it ^{for} herself.”

“ Tut, tut ! ” exclaimed Haroun, “ so you passed a false sentence, police magistrate ? Why, then, did you believe that this purse belonged to the merchant ? ”

“ He swore to it,” answered the police magistrate nervously.

“ So you perjured yourself ? ” said the Caliph in a voice of thunder to the merchant, who stood pale and trembling before him.

“ Allah, Allah ! ” he cried. “ Of course, I will not

say a word against the Lord Grand Vizier, he is a credible man; but, oh! the purse did, nevertheless, belong to me, and was stolen from me by that worthless Saïd. I would give a thousand tomans if he were here on the spot."

"What did you do, then, with this Saïd?" asked the Caliph. "Tell me where he is to be found, that he may make his confession to me."

"I sent him off to a desert island," said the police magistrate.

"Oh, Saïd! My son, my son!" cried the unhappy father, with tears.

"So he pleaded guilty to the crime?" asked Haroun.

The police magistrate turned pale. He rolled his eyes to and fro, and at last he said: "As far as I can remember at this moment—yes."

"You do not know for certain, then?" continued the Caliph in a terrible voice. "Well, we will ask him himself. Advance, Saïd; and you, Kalum-Bek, count out your thousand gold pieces first of all, for he is here on the spot."

Kalum and the police magistrate thought they saw a ghost. They prostrated themselves, crying: "Mercy, mercy!" Benezar, almost fainting with joy, threw himself into the arms of his lost son. But with inflexible severity the Caliph now asked: "Police magistrate, here stands Saïd. Did he plead guilty?"

"No, no!" yelled the police magistrate; "I only heard Kalum's evidence, because he is a man of some importance."

"Did I appoint you judge over all that you might only hear what people of distinction have to say?" exclaimed Haroun Al Raschid in righteous anger. "I shall banish you for ten years to a desert island in the

middle of the sea, where you can meditate on justice ; and you, you miserable creature, who ministers to the needs of the dying, not to deliver them but to make them your slaves, you shall pay, as I said, your thousand tomans, because you promised, if Saïd appeared, that they should be your witness."

Kalum was delighted to get out of this bad business so cheaply, and even wanted to thank the kind Caliph. But the latter continued. "For your false oath concerning the hundred gold pieces, you shall receive a hundred strokes on the soles of your feet. Beyond this, I shall leave it to Saïd to settle whether he will confiscate your whole shop, and take you as his porter, or whether he will be content to receive ten gold pieces for every day during which he served you."

"Let the wretched creature off, Caliph," cried the youth ; "I don't want anything which belongs to him."

"No," answered Haroun ; "I wish you to have compensation. I shall choose, instead of you, the ten gold pieces for every day, and you shall calculate how many days you were in his clutches. Now, away with these wretches."

They were led away, and the Caliph took Benezar and Saïd into another room. There he himself told the proud father of the wonderful way in which Saïd had rescued him, and the story was only interrupted from time to time, by howls proceeding from the courtyard, where Kalum-Bek was paying the full value of his hundred gold pieces on the soles of his feet.

The Caliph invited Benezar to come and live with Saïd at his Court in Bagdad. He accepted the proposal, and only undertook one more journey to his native land, in order to fetch the larger part of his

goods and chattels. But Saïd continued to live like a prince in the palace which the grateful Caliph had built for him. The Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son were his constant companions, and it became a proverb in Bagdad to say: "I should like to be as good and as happy as Saïd, the son of Benezar."

"A story of that kind would never allow me to feel sleepy, even if I were obliged to stay awake two, three, or even more nights," said the compass-maker when the huntsman had finished. "And I have often found it the case. In old days I was apprenticed at a bell foundry. The manager was a rich man, and no miser. And this was just the reason why we were so surprised, when we once had a big piece of work on hand, to see him become, quite contrary to his custom, the veriest pinch-penny. A bell was being cast for a new church, and we boys and apprentices had to spend the whole night at the furnace, keeping the fire in. We, of course, concluded that the master would open his oldest cask, and serve out some of his best wine. But not a bit of it! He only gave us a drink all round every hour, and began to tell us all sorts of stories about his travels and his experiences; then the head apprentices had to hold forth—in fact, all of us in turn—and none of us felt sleepy, for we all listened to one another with such feelings of curiosity. It was day before we were aware of it. Then we realised how cunning the master had been to keep us all awake by talking. For when the bell was finished he did not spare his wine, but served out everything which he had wisely kept from us during the night."

"That was a sensible man," answered the student. "Certainly nothing keeps one from going to sleep like

talking; that is why I did not wish to be alone to-night, because I knew that towards eleven o'clock I should not be able to keep awake."

"The peasant people have come to that conclusion also," said the huntsman. "If the women and girls wish to spin by candle-light during the winter evenings they never stay at home alone, as they might, very likely, fall asleep over their work, but all assemble in what they call the 'light room,' and set to work in a large party, telling one another stories the while."

"Yes," said the carter, joining in; "and it is often a gruesome business, for they talk about fiery spirits who haunt the world, and goblins who rap at one's door in the night, and of every sort of ghost which terrifies both human beings and cattle, until one is fairly frightened out of one's wits."

"Well, they certainly don't choose the best form of entertainment," replied the student; "I declare there is nothing I hate more than ghost stories."

"Why, I am quite of the other way of thinking," exclaimed the compass-maker; "it gives me real satisfaction to hear a story which makes one shiver; it is just like sleeping under a roof when it is pouring with rain. One listens to the drops splashing tick, tack, tick, tack, down on the tiles, and feels so delightfully warm and dry oneself. In the same way it gives one such a safe and comfortable feeling to hear a ghost-story in the light of the lamp and in good company."

"But afterwards?" said the student. "If one has been listening to somebody who is the victim of an absurd belief in ghosts, does one not feel cold all over when one is alone and in the dark? Do you not know how the mind is besieged with the memory of all the horrors one ever heard of? I, even to this

day, feel quite annoyed with these ghost stories when I think of my childhood. I was a merry, high-spirited little fellow, perhaps rather more restless than was quite approved of by my nurse, so she could think of no other way of keeping me quiet than by frightening me. She told me all sorts of horrible tales about witches and evil spirits, who were supposed to haunt the house, and if a cat happened to be frolicking downstairs she would whisper to me in an awesome voice: 'Do you hear, my boy? Now, he is going up and down, up and down the stairs—the dead man. He is carrying his head under his arm, but his eyes shine like two lanterns; he has claws instead of fingers, and if he catches anyone on the stairs he wrings his neck.' "

The men laughed at this story, but the student continued: "I was too young to perceive that it was all a lie and an invention. I was not afraid of the huge staghound, and I could throw anyone of my playmates to the ground, but whenever I was in the dark I would tightly close my eyes, for I was sure the dead man would come creeping by. It came to such a pass that, once it was dark, I would never stir outside the door alone or without a light. How many a time my father punished me for this fault! But it was a long time before I could get rid of this childish fear, and it was all my nurse's fault."

"Yes; it is a great mistake," remarked the huntsman, "to fill a child's thoughts with such foolishness. I assure you I have known brave, daring men, and sportsmen into the bargain, who were not afraid to face three antagonists at a time, although their courage would suddenly fail them if they had to keep watch at night in the forest for wild beasts or poachers, for

they took a tree to be a horrible ghost, and thought a shrub was a witch, while two glow-worms seemed like the eyes of some monster lurking in the dark."

"And not only as regards children," returned the student, "do I consider amusement of this kind to be highly injurious and foolish, but also for everyone; for what sensible man could find diversion in hearing of the habits and doings of creatures which only exist in the brain of a fool? That is where they exist, and nowhere else. These stories do the greatest harm among the country people. Those poor folk believe firmly and indisputably in absurdities of this kind, and this belief is cherished in every spinning-room and tavern, where they sit close together, telling one another the most horrible stories with trembling voices."

"Yes, sir," answered the carter; "you may not be far wrong; many a misfortune has occurred from stories of that kind; in fact, my own sister came to a miserable end in that way."

"How was that? Because of such stories?" exclaimed the men in astonishment.

"Yes, indeed, because of such stories," he repeated. "In the village where my father lived, it is also the custom for the women and girls to sit together over their spinning through the winter evenings. The young men would often join them, and tell all sorts of stories. So it happened one evening that the conversation was entirely about ghosts and apparitions, and the lads were telling about an old shopkeeper who had been dead ten years, and yet could find no rest in his coffin. Every night he would throw off the earth which covered him, climb out of his grave, and crawl away to his shop with slow steps and a hacking cough, just as he had done in his lifetime,

and there he would weigh out sugar and coffee, muttering to himself :

“ ‘Three quarters of this, three quarters of that,
When weighed in the scale at twelve in the night,
Makes one pound of this, one pound of that,
When sold in the shop in broadest daylight.’ ”

“Many declared that they had seen him, and the women and girls began to be very frightened. My sister, however, a maid of sixteen years old, thought herself cleverer than the rest, and said : ‘I don’t believe a word of it ; no one can return to this world who has once been dead.’ So she said, but, unfortunately, spoke without conviction, for she had often been very frightened herself. Then one of the young people remarked : ‘If you really believe that you will not be afraid of him ; his grave is only a few steps away from that of Kitty, who died a short time ago. Just have a try ; go to the churchyard, pick a flower from off Kitty’s grave, and bring it to us, then we will believe that you are not afraid of the old shopkeeper.’ ”

“My sister was ashamed of incurring the ridicule of her companions, so she said : ‘Oh, that is easily done ! What sort of flower would you like ?’ ”

“ ‘There is no other white rose in the village except there, so bring us a spray of that,’ answered one of her friends. She rose from her seat, and departed, all the men praising her courage, while the women shook their heads, and said : ‘If it only goes off all right !’ My sister went off to the churchyard ; the moon was shining brightly, and she began to shiver as she opened the lych gate, and the hour struck twelve. ”

“She stepped over the mounds of many a well-known

grave, and her heart beat faster and faster the nearer she approached to Kitty's white roses and the grave of the ghostly shopkeeper.

"At last she had reached it; trembling, she knelt down, and picked the flowers. Then she thought she heard a noise quite close to her. She looked round; a few steps behind her the earth flew off a grave, and a figure slowly raised itself up. It was a pale old man; with a white night-cap on his head. My sister was terrified. She glanced round once more to be certain that she had seen aright, but when he from the grave addressed her in a nasal voice: 'Good-evening, maiden; whither are you going so late?' she was seized with a sickening horror. She picked herself up, leapt over the graves back to the house, and breathlessly told them what she had seen; then she felt so weak that she had to be carried home. What good did it do us to learn the next day that it was the sexton who had been digging a grave there, and had spoken to my sister? Before she could be told this she fell into a high fever, to which she succumbed in three days. She herself had plucked the roses for her own funeral wreath."

The carter stopped, with tears in his eyes, and the others looked at him in deep sympathy.

"So the poor child died from her blind faith," said the young goldsmith; "that reminds me of a story which I should like to tell you, and which, unfortunately, is connected with a melancholy incident of the same kind."

STEENFOLL CAVE.

A SCOTTISH LEGEND.

MANY years ago, on one of the rocky islands of Scotland, there lived, in perfect harmony, two fishermen. They were bachelors, with no relations, and their joint labour, although expended on different objects, provided them both with a living. In their old age they grew very close to one another, although in person and disposition they resembled each other no more than an eagle and a seal.

Jasper Stock was a short, thick-set man, with a broad, fat face like a full moon, and kind, laughing eyes, which looked as though they had never seen any sorrow or anxiety. He was not only fat but a sleepy, lazy fellow, and so it came to pass that the greater part of the house work, the cooking and baking, fell to his share, and it was he who made nets both for their own use and for sale, and to a great extent tilled their little piece of ground. His companion was in every way his opposite : a tall, thin specimen of humanity, with a sharp, aquiline nose and piercing eyes. He was the most active and most successful fisherman, the most enterprising climber in search of birds and down, the most hard-working labourer in the island, and was also renowned as being better than anyone in the market at Kirkwall at driving a hard bargain ; but as his wares were good, and there was no deception about him, everybody liked doing business with him, and Bill Hawk (as the country people called him) and Jasper Stock, with whom, in spite of his grasping disposition, he willingly shared his hard-earned profits, not only had a sufficient income, but were well on the road towards

a certain degree of prosperity. But Hawk's grasping disposition not only aimed at being "well off"; he wanted to be rich, very rich, and, as he soon realised that wealth was not very quickly attained along the humdrum road of industry, he eventually became convinced that he should have to make his fortune by some exceptional stroke of luck, and once this idea had taken possession of his ambitious spirit, he could think of nothing else, and began to discuss it with Jasper Stock as a thing which was sure to happen. The latter, who always accepted everything Hawk said as gospel truth, repeated this to his neighbours, and soon the rumour spread that Bill Hawk had either actually sold himself to the Evil One for money, or that he had received some offer of the kind from the Prince of Darkness.

At first Hawk laughed at this report, but gradually he began to cherish the thought that there was somewhere a spirit who would one day be able to reveal a treasure to him, and he no longer contradicted his friends when they rallied him about it. He certainly continued to work, but with much less zeal, and he often wasted much of the time which it had been formerly his custom to spend in fishing, or in other useful labour, in a vague search for some adventure or other, by which he might suddenly become rich. And, as ill luck would have it, as he was standing one day on a lonely part of the beach, staring into the water with a certain feeling of expectation, as if it were from there that his good fortune would come, a huge wave swept up to his feet, among a mass of seaweed and shingle, a yellow ball—a ball of pure gold.

Bill stood as if bewitched; his hopes had, then, not been mere empty dreams; the sea had presented him

with gold, pure, fine gold, probably the remains of some heavy bar, which the waves had ground to the size of a cannon ball, at the bottom of the sea. And he realised in a flash that, somewhere on this coast, a richly laden ship must once have been wrecked, and that he was destined to raise this treasure from the depths of the ocean. From this moment, all his energies were directed towards this one object. He was most secretive about his find, even hiding the fact from his friend, for fear that others might get a hint of his discovery, and, neglecting everything else, he spent whole days and nights off this coast, not throwing out his net after fish but lowering in search of gold, a particular kind of dipper which he had made with his own hands. But he found nothing but poverty, for he himself was no longer earning anything, and Jasper's sleepy endeavours did not suffice to keep them both. Not only the gold which had already been discovered gradually disappeared in this search for greater treasures, but also the whole property of these two bachelors. But as Stock in silence had formerly allowed Hawk to earn the greater part of their income, so now he suffered without a word of complaint that he should be deprived of it by Bill's purposeless activity, and it was just his friend's gentle patience which incited Hawk to continue with ever-increasing vigour his restless search after a fortune. What especially increased his activity was that every time he laid himself to rest, and closed his eyes, something whispered a word to him in his ear, which, although he thought he heard it quite clearly at the time, and it seemed always to be the same word, he could never retain in his memory. It is true that he did not know what this occurrence, strange as it was, could have to do with his present quest; but everything made an

impression on a nature like that of Bill Hawk, and even these mysterious whispers contributed to strengthen his belief that he was destined for some great piece of luck, which he could only hope would be realised in the discovery of a treasure heap.

One day he was overtaken by a storm on the beach where he had found his golden ball, and its great violence drove him to seek shelter in a neighbouring cave.

This cave, called by the natives Steenfoll Cave, consists of a long subterranean corridor, which opens in two mouths towards the sea, forming a free passage for the waves, through which they force their way in foaming masses and with a roaring sound. It could only be reached from one spot, and that an opening from above, which was seldom used, however, except by mischievous boys, because the call of some spirit was associated with the peculiar dangers of the place. Bill lowered himself with considerable difficulty through this entrance, and took up his position under an overhanging piece of rock, on a ledge which jutted out from the side of the cave some twelve feet from the top. Here, with the roaring waves at his feet, and the storm raging above his head, he fell once more into his usual train of thought, and became absorbed in the question of the wrecked ship, and of what kind of ship it could be, for in spite of all his inquiries he could glean no information, even from the oldest inhabitants of the place, about any vessel having been wrecked on this spot. How long he had sat there he did not know, but when he eventually awoke from his brown study, he discovered that the storm had passed over, and he was just about to leave the cave, when a voice out of the deep distinctly pronounced the one word: "Carmilhan." He clambered up in great terror, and looked back into the empty

abyss. "Great God!" he exclaimed, "that is the word which has haunted me in my sleep! What, in the name of Heaven, can it mean?" Again "Carmilhan" was wafted up, as it were with a sigh, from the cavern just as he reached the fissure in the rock, and he bolted away to his hut like a frightened deer.

Bill, however, was no coward, it was only that this had happened so unexpectedly; his thirst for gold was too strong within him for any suggestion of danger to have power to turn him from his perilous course. Once as he was fishing for treasure quite late at night, just opposite to Steenfoll Cave, by the light of the moon, something caught on to his shovel. He pulled with all his might, but the lump remained immovable. Meanwhile the wind had risen, dense clouds had collected in the sky, the boat was rocking violently, and threatened to capsize. But Bill was not to be thwarted; he pulled and pulled till the resistance ceased, and as he felt no weight he thought his rope had broken, but just as the clouds were about to veil the moon a round, black mass appeared on the surface, and once more that haunting word "Carmilhan," rang out. He hastily tried to seize it, but although he stretched out his arm with all speed it disappeared in the darkness of the night, and the storm, which now burst, forced him to seek shelter under the nearest rocks. Here he fell asleep from sheer fatigue, but only to be pestered again, with the unrestrained imagination which comes with sleep, by the torments which he suffered all day in his unceasing struggles after wealth. The first rays of the rising sun were being mirrored in the now becalmed surface of the sea when Hawk awoke. He was just about to set to work once more at his usual task, when he saw something approaching him in the distance. He soon made out

that it was a boat, in which he discerned the figure of a man: what surprised him most was that the vessel was advancing without oars or a sail, and with the bows pointing towards the shore, although the figure sitting in the boat did not seem to pay the slightest attention to the rudder—that is to say, if there were one. The boat came nearer and nearer, and eventually stopped near Bill's fishing smack. Its occupant was now seen to be a little, shrunken old man dressed in yellow linen, with a high pointed night-cap; his eyes were shut, and he sat motionless in his seat like a dried-up corpse. After Bill had called and poked this apparition with no result he was about to tie the boat with a rope to his own craft, in order to tow it away, when the little man opened his eyes, and began to move in a manner which filled even the stout-hearted fisherman with terror.

"Where am I?" asked this strange phenomenon in Dutch, with a sigh. Hawk, who had picked up a little of the language from the Dutch herring fishers, told him the name of the island, and asked him who he was and what had brought him hither.

"I have come to see after the Carmilhan."

"The Carmilhan? For God's sake, what is that?" exclaimed the fisherman greedily.

"I do not answer questions which are put to me in this manner," answered the little man, in evident alarm.

"Well, what is the Carmilhan?" cried Hawk.

"The Carmilhan is nothing now, but once she was a beautiful ship, laden with more gold than any other vessel has ever carried."

"Where did she sink—and when?"

"It was a hundred years ago; where I do not exactly know. I have come to seek for the exact place, and to

fish up the lost treasure ; if you will help me we will go shares in what we find."

"With all my heart ; but just tell me what I must do."

"What you have to do requires courage : just before midnight you must betake yourself to the wildest and loneliest part of the island, accompanied by a cow, which you must slaughter there, and get someone to wrap you in her warm skin. Your companion must then lay you down, and leave you, and before it strikes one o'clock, you will know where the treasure of the *Carmilhan* is to be found."

"This was how the angel brought about his destruction of body and soul !" exclaimed Bill, with horror. "You are the evil spirit," he said, rowing off with rapid strokes. "Go to hell ! I do not want to have anything more to do with you."

The little man gnashed his teeth, and sent a shower of reproaches and curses after him ; but the fisherman, who had seized both oars, was soon out of hearing, and, when he had turned round the corner of a rock, was out of sight as well. But the discovery that the Evil Spirit was seeking to make use of his avarice, and to entice him with gold into his clutches, did not cure the misguided fisherman ; on the contrary, he hoped to be able to use the information of the yellow mannikin without surrendering himself to the Evil One. As he still continued to fish for gold off this barren coast he quite neglected the opportunities of earning an income which were offered him in the rich fisheries in other parts of the sea, as well as the other employments on which he had formerly expended his energies, and day by day he and his mate became more pinched by poverty, until at last even the bare necessities of life were often

lacking. This occurrence must be entirely ascribed to Hawk's stiff-necked obstinacy and false ambition; but although the responsibility of earning a livelihood for them both, now devolved entirely on Jasper Stock he never uttered the slightest reproach; indeed, he even showed quite as much submission, and quite as much confidence in the superiority of Hawk's intellectual powers, as in the days when his undertakings were always attended with success. This condition of things considerably aggravated Hawk's torments, but encouraged him, nevertheless, to pursue his search for gold with all the more ardour, in the hopes of being able some day to make compensation to his friend for their present straitened circumstances. Thus he never ceased to be haunted, even in his slumber, by that demoniacal whisper of the word "Carmilhan." In short, his poverty, his disappointed hopes, and his insatiable greed eventually drove him to a kind of madness, so that he actually determined to do what the little man had advised, although he well knew, from the old legends, that by so doing he was giving himself up to the powers of darkness.

All Jasper's remonstrances were in vain; the more he urged Hawk to desist from such a desperate undertaking the more eager was the latter to embark upon it. And the good, weak fellow at length consented to accompany his friend, and to help him to carry out his plan. Both their hearts were torn with pain as they tied a rope round the horns of a beautiful cow, their last possession, whom they had bred from the time she was a calf, and whom they had always refused to sell, as they could never make up their minds to relinquish her to strange hands. But the Evil Spirit, who had now entire possession of Bill, stifled all better feelings in him,

and Jasper did not know how to resist him. It was September, and the long nights of the Scottish winter had begun. A boisterous wind was chasing the night clouds across the sky, and herding them like icebergs over the valley; dense shadows lay in the gorges between the mountains and on the moist peat bogs, and the streams in their courses looked black and fearful like the chasm of hell. Hawk went in front, and Stock followed, shuddering at his own audacity, and with tears filling his gentle eyes whenever he looked at the poor beast, who was going so confidently and so innocently to her death, which was to come from the hands of him whom she had always provided with nourishment. At last they reached with difficulty the narrow, boggy valley, bare of all vegetation except moss and heather, and covered with large stones; shut in by a range of rugged mountains, whose peaks were now lost in the mist, this valley was seldom trod by human foot. They advanced across the swampy ground to a huge stone which was planted in the centre, and from which they frightened away an eagle, who flew off with a croaking sound. The poor cow bellowed softly, as if she realised the horrors of the place and her impending fate. Jasper turned away to wipe the tears which were coursing down his cheeks. He looked back at the path through the rocks by which they had made their ascent, and from where the distant roar of the sea reached their ears; then he glanced up at the mountain peaks, covered with dense, black masses of cloud, and from this direction, too, a faint rumbling sound could be heard. By the time he once more turned his eyes towards Bill the latter had already tied the poor cow to the stone, and was standing with uplifted axe ready to smite the poor beast to the ground.

This was too much for Jasper's resolution to submit to his friend's will. Wringing his hands, he flung himself on his knees. "For God's sake, Bill Hawk," he exclaimed in a voice of despair, "spare yourself, spare the cow, spare yourself and me, spare your soul, spare your life! And, if you must tempt Providence, wait at least until morning, and rather sacrifice another animal than our own dear cow!"

"Jasper, are you mad?" cried Bill, like one out of his senses, still holding the axe poised aloft. "Shall I spare the cow, and starve to death myself?"

"You shall not starve," answered Jasper with determination; "as long as I have a pair of hands you shall not starve. I will work from morning till night for you; only do not forfeit the salvation of your soul or kill the poor beast."

"Then take the axe, and cleave my skull in two," yelled Hawk in a voice of desperation; "I do not intend to stir from this spot till I get what I want. Can you find me the treasure of the *Carmilhan*? Can your hands earn more than the merest necessities of life? But you may put an end to my misery; come on, let *me* be the sacrifice."

"Bill, kill the cow—kill me! It does not matter to me. I am only concerned about your own salvation. Oh, this is, indeed, the altar of the ancient Picts, and the sacrifice you wish to offer is a work of darkness!"

"It is nothing of the kind," cried Hawk, with a wild laugh, like one who is determined to know nothing which could deter him from his purpose. "Jasper, you are mad, and you are sending me mad. But there," he continued, flinging away the hatchet, and seizing the knife from off the stone, as if he intended to stab himself—"there!—keep your cow instead of me."

Jasper was at his side in a moment, and, wrenching the murderous weapon from his hand, he grasped the hatchet, and, swinging it high in the air, he let it fall with such force on the head of the beloved animal, that she dropped dead at her master's feet without so much as a quiver.

A flash of lightning, accompanied almost instantaneously by a clap of thunder, followed this rapid action, and Hawk stared at his friend in the same way as a man gazes at a child who ventures to do something for which he himself had not the courage. Stock, however, seemed neither unnerved by the thunder nor discomposed by his comrade's fixed gaze of astonishment, but, falling without a word upon the cow, he began to skin her. When Bill had recovered somewhat he lent a hand in this business, but did so with quite as much reluctance as he had previously shown eagerness to see the sacrifice completed. While they were engaged on this work the storm had increased, the thunder echoed loudly among the mountains, and vivid flashes of lightning quivered round the stone and over the moss in the gorge while the wind, which had not yet reached these heights, howled among the lower valleys and along the shore. By the time the skin had eventually been stripped off both the fishermen were wet through. They spread it out on the ground, and Jasper wrapped Hawk up in it, and tied it tightly round him, according to the instructions he had received. It was only then, when all was completed, that the poor fellow broke his long silence, and, looking down compassionately at his deluded friend, he asked in a trembling voice: "Can I do anything else for you, Bill?"

"Nothing else," answered the other; "farewell."

“Farewell,” replied Jasper. “God be with you, and may He forgive you, as I do.”

These were the last words which Bill heard, for the next moment Jasper had vanished in the ever-increasing darkness. And in the same instant, one of the most fearful thunder-storms Bill had ever experienced burst over his head. It began with a flash of lightning, so vivid that it not only lit up the mountains and rocks in his immediate neighbourhood, but also exposed to view the whole of the valley beneath him, with the foaming sea beyond, and among the scattered groups of rocky islands in the bay, he caught sight of a large, dismasted ship of foreign appearance, which the next moment had disappeared once more in the blackness of the night. The claps of thunder were deafening, whole pieces of rock were dislodged from the mountain-side, and threatened to kill him in their downward rush. The rain poured down in such torrents that the narrow valley was soon flooded, and the water rose to the level of Bill's shoulders, even though Jasper had, happily, laid the upper part of his body against a mound, otherwise he must surely have been drowned. The water rose higher and higher, and the more Bill struggled to move from his perilous position the more tightly did the skin seem to wrap itself round him. It was in vain that he shouted for Jasper: Jasper was far away. He did not dare to cry to God in his misery, and yet he shuddered at the thought of appealing to those powers to whom he felt he had delivered himself.

Now the water was pouring into his ears, now it was lapping up to his mouth. “God! I am lost!” he cried as he felt a splash on his face, but at that moment he heard a sound of falling water, and his mouth was once more uncovered; the flood had forced a passage for

itself through the rocks. At the same time the rain began to fall with less violence, and the pitch darkness seemed to lift somewhat, so that Bill felt there was once more a ray of hope. But although he was exhausted as if from a hand-to-hand combat with death, and earnestly longed for his release from this bondage, the object of his desperate struggles was not yet attained, and with the disappearance of any immediate danger his avarice returned in all its fury. Convinced, however, that he could do nothing but wait patiently where he was, in order to reach his goal, he remained quite quiet, and eventually, numbed by cold and fatigue, fell into a deep sleep.

He might have slept some two hours, when he was aroused from his blissful state of unconsciousness, by a cold wind blowing across his face and the roar of incoming waves. Darkness had once more fallen upon the heavens. A flash of lightning like that which had heralded the first storm once more lit up the surrounding country, and again and again he thought he saw that weird ship, which at one moment appeared to be poised on an uplifted wave off the Steenfolli Cliff, and the next seemed to plunge suddenly down into the deep. He still continued to gaze at the phantom, for the sea was now entirely illuminated by incessant flashes of lightning, when all at once an immense column of water arose out of the valley, and flung him with such force against a rock that he was rendered unconscious. When he once more came to himself the thunder-storm had passed over, and the sky was brighter, but the lightning still flashed intermittently. He was lying at the very foot of the range of mountains which surrounded the valley, and he felt so battered about that he was hardly able to move. He could hear the dull thud of the

breakers, with which was mingled a sound of solemn music like a hymn ; this sound was at first so faint that he thought it was some delusion. He still continued to hear it, however, and gradually it grew louder, and seemed to come nearer, so that at last he was able to distinguish the tune of a Psalm which he had heard in the foregoing summer on board a Dutch fishing smack.

Then he even began to distinguish voices, and eventually he felt he could almost hear the words of the chant. The voices were now in the valley, and when he had dragged himself, with great difficulty, to a stone, on which he could raise his head, he perceived a procession of male figures advancing straight towards him from the direction from whence these sounds proceeded. These people had all a look of sorrow and anxiety on their faces, and their clothes appeared to be dripping with water. They were now close to him, and their chant ceased. Several musicians headed the procession, followed by a number of sailors, behind whom marched a big, powerful man in an old-fashioned costume, covered with rich gold ornaments ; he had a sword at his side, and a long, stout Spanish cane with a gold knob in his hand. A black boy walked on his left, and at intervals handed his master a long pipe, from which the latter solemnly took one or two puffs, and then walked on. He halted when he came to Bill Hawk, and stood bolt upright in front of him ; some other men, less magnificently clad, took up their position on either side of him, all with pipes in their hands, which did not seem, however, to be of such a costly make as the one which was carried behind the stout man. After these came several other persons, many of them women, some holding children in their arms or by the hand, and all richly dressed, but after a foreign fashion. A crowd of Dutch

sailors brought up the rear, with their mouths full of tobacco, and holding between their teeth little brown pipes, which they smoked in gloomy silence.

The fisherman stared with horror at this strange company, but his curiosity to know what would happen next braced his courage. They stood round him for a long time, and the smoke of their pipes hung over their heads like a cloud, through which the stars winked fitfully. The circle closed in nearer and nearer to Bill, the smoke rising from every mouth, and every pipe became more overpowering, the cloud more dense. Hawk was a stout-hearted, enterprising man; and had prepared himself for strange occurrences, but when he saw this strange and incomprehensible crowd pressing in upon him, as if they wished to suffocate him with their numbers, his courage failed him, large drops of sweat hung on his forehead, and he thought he should die of fear. But can one conceive his terror when, as he happened to turn away his eyes, he perceived the little yellow mannikin sitting rigidly upright close to his head, looking just as Hawk had seen him that first time, except that now he also had a pipe in his mouth, as if in mockery of the whole company? In the deadly panic which now seized Bill he turned to the head man, crying: "In the name of him whom you serve, who are you, and what do you want from me?" The big man drew three puffs at his pipe more solemnly than ever, then, handing it to his servant, he answered in a voice of terrifying coldness: "I am Alfred Francis van Swelder, owner of the ship *Carmilhan*, from Amsterdam, which was wrecked with all hands off this rocky coast on her return voyage from Batavia; these are my officers, these my passengers, and these my brave sailors, who were all drowned with me. Why have you

summoned us from our habitation in the depths of the sea ; wherefore do you disturb our rest ? ”

“ I wish to know where the *Carmilhan*’s treasure lies.”

“ At the bottom of the sea.”

“ Where ? ”

“ In Steenfoll Cave.”

“ How shall I get hold of it ? ”

“ A goose dives into the deep after a herring ; are the treasures of the *Carmilhan* not even worth so much trouble ? ”

“ How much shall I get ? ”

“ More than you will ever spend.” The yellow mannikin grinned, and the whole company laughed aloud. “ Have you finished ? ” asked the captain.

“ I have ; farewell.”

“ Farewell, till we meet again,” answered the Dutchman, and turned away. The musicians stepped in front, and the whole procession retreated in the same order in which it had come, singing the same solemn hymn, which became softer and softer in the distance, until in a short time the sound was entirely lost in the crash of the breakers on the beach. Bill now struggled with all his might to free himself from his bands, and managed eventually to extract one arm, with which he loosened the cord which was tied round him, and at last wriggled himself out of the skin. Without once glancing round he hurried back to his hut, where he found poor Jasper Stock lying on the floor in a state of utter unconsciousness. He brought him to his senses with considerable difficulty, and the poor fellow wept with joy when he saw before him the friend of his youth, whom he had believed to be eternally lost. But this ray of consolation soon vanished when he heard of the desperate undertaking which Hawk now had in prospect.

“ I would rather fling myself down into hell than face these bare walls and all this misery any longer. Follow me or not as you like ; I am going.” With these words Bill seized a torch, a gun, and a rope, and hurried away. Jasper followed him with all haste, and found him standing on the same ledge of rock on which he had once sheltered from the storm, ready to let himself down on the rope into the black and swirling pool. When he found that his arguments were of no avail with the insane man he prepared to descend after him, but Hawk ordered him to stay where he was, and hold the rope. With fearful exertion, for which only the most insensate avarice could have given him either the courage or the strength, Hawk clambered down into the cave, and eventually reached a protruding piece of rock, where he could find for a moment a support for his foot, and could look straight down into the pitchy abyss, in which the white-crested waves were swirling round with a deafening roar. His glance travelled greedily hither and thither, until at last it rested on something shimmering in the water just below him. He put down his torch, dived into the deep, and grasped something heavy, which he brought up with him. It was an iron casket filled with gold pieces. He told his companion what he had found, but would on no account listen to his entreaties to be content with what he had already secured, and to leave the cave. Hawk thought that this was merely the first fruits of his steady perseverance. He dived a second time, the sound of loud laughter rang out of the depths of the sea, and Bill Hawk was seen no more. Jasper went home alone, but he was a changed man ; the strange shock which he had suffered, both to his weak head and his sensitive heart, sent him out of his mind. He let everything belonging to him go to

pieces, and wandered about day and night, staring blankly in front of him, pitied and shunned by all his former acquaintances. A fisherman is supposed, one stormy night, to have seen Bill Hawk standing on the shore among the crew of the *Carmilhan*, and that same night Jasper Stock also disappeared.

A search was made for him in every direction; nowhere, however, could any trace of him be found. But according to the legends he is often to be seen standing at Hawk's side amongst the crew of the enchanted ship, which since then has appeared at regular intervals in Steenfoll Cave.

"It is long past midnight," said the student when the young goldsmith had finished his story. "There can be no danger now, and, for my part, I am so sleepy that I should like to advise you all to lie down, and go comfortably to sleep."

"I shall not feel safe, though, till two o'clock in the morning," replied the huntsman; "the proverb says: 'From eleven till two is thieving time.'"

"I think so too," remarked the compass-maker, "for if anyone wishes to get something out of us, there is no more opportune time than after midnight, so I think our learned friend here might continue his story, which he has not yet quite finished."

"I have no objection," said the student, "although our neighbour, Master Huntsman, has not heard the beginning."

"I must guess at it; start away!" cried the huntsman.

"Well, then," began the student, when he was interrupted by the barking of a dog. They all held their breath, and listened. The next moment one of the Coun-

tess's servants rushed out of her room, crying that quite ten or twelve armed men were approaching the tavern from her side of the house.

The huntsman seized his gun, the student his pistol, while the two apprentices grasped their sticks, and the carter drew a long knife out of his pocket. Then they stood, and looked at each other in perplexity.

"Let us go to the head of the stairs," suggested the student. "Two or three of these scoundrels shall give up their lives before we are overpowered." Then he gave the compass-maker two pistols, and advised him only to shoot one after the other. They took up their position on the stairs: the student and the huntsman filled the whole width of the staircase; the gallant compass-maker stood on one side of the huntsman, bending over the banisters, pointing the mouths of his pistols towards the middle of the steps; the goldsmith and the carter stood just behind, prepared to play their part if it came to a hand-to-hand fight. They stood thus for some minutes in silent expectation; at last the front door was heard to open, and the sound of several voices talking in whispers reached them.

Now several steps were heard approaching, and then mounting the stairs, and three men appeared on the first flight, evidently not prepared for the reception that awaited them, for as they turned a corner of the banisters the huntsman shouted in a strong voice: "Halt! Another step, and you are dead! Cock your guns, friends, and take careful aim."

The brigands staggered back in terror, and consulted with the others. In a short time one of them returned, and said: "Gentlemen, it would be sheer madness on your part to sacrifice your lives uselessly, for there are

enough of us to exterminate you all, but if you will retire the least possible harm shall befall you ; we have no wish to take a single farthing from you."

"What do you want, then?" cried the student. "Do you think we mean to trust a mob of rogues like you? Not we! If you wish to fetch anything come on, in God's name, but the first one of you who dares to show his nose round that corner shall have his brains blown out, so that he will not suffer any more from headache!"

"Give us the lady of your own free will," answered the brigand. "Nothing shall happen to her; we only mean to take her to some safe and comfortable place, and her servants can ride back and ask the Lord Count to pay a ransom of twenty thousand florins for her."

"Do you think we are going to entertain any proposals of that sort?" replied the huntsman, gnashing his teeth with rage, and cocking his gun. "I shall count three, and if you people down there do not take to your heels before I say three I shall fire. One, two——"

"Stop!" shouted the brigand in a voice of thunder. "Is it customary to fire on a defenceless man who is trying to come to a friendly agreement with you? You insane fellow, you can shoot me dead, but then you will have done no such heroic deed, and there are twenty of my comrades here who will avenge me. What good will it do your Lady Countess if you are lying dead or mangled on the floor? Believe me, if she comes with us voluntarily she shall be treated with consideration, but if by the time I have counted three, you do not uncock your gun it shall go ill with you. Uncock your gun! One, two, three!"

"These dogs are not to be trifled with," whispered the huntsman as he submitted to the brigand's command;

"certainly my life is worth nothing, but they might treat my mistress more cruelly, were I to shoot one of these fellows. I will ask the Countess what she advises. Give us," he continued in a louder voice, "give us half-an-hour's truce in which to prepare the Countess ; if she heard this so suddenly she would die of it."

"Agreed," answered the brigand, and at once put a watch of six men at the foot of the stairs.

The unfortunate travellers followed the huntsman, in a state of great trouble and perplexity, to the Countess's room ; this was so near, and the discussion had been so loud, that not a word of it had escaped her. She was very pale, and trembled violently, but, nevertheless, she was firmly resolved to resign herself to her fate. "Why should I uselessly expose the lives of so many brave people to such risk ?" she said. "Why should I demand any protection from you—you who barely know me—when all resistance must be in vain ? No ; I see that there is no other way out of it but to follow the wretch."

They were all much touched by the Countess's misfortune and her courage. The huntsman wept, and swore that he would never survive this disgrace ; the student cursed himself and his six feet of height. "If I were only half-a-head shorter," he exclaimed, "and if I had no beard, I should have no doubt about what could be done ; I should make the Lady Countess give me some of her clothes, and these scoundrels would find out late enough what a mistake they had made."

Felix also had been greatly impressed by the Countess's trouble. Her whole manner seemed so familiar, and touched him so deeply, that it might have been the mother who died in his childhood who now found herself in this fearful plight. He felt so inspired with

courage that he would gladly have laid down his life for her. Then when the student had been speaking, a thought had flashed all at once across his mind. He forgot all fear, all considerations, except the rescue of this woman. "If that is all that is wanted," he said, "if the rescue of this gracious lady can be accomplished merely by a small body, a beardless chin, and a stout heart into the bargain, perhaps even I would suffice for the purpose. In God's name, put on my coat, cover your beautiful hair with my hat, take my bundle on your back, and go your way as Felix, the goldsmith."

All were astonished at the lad's pluck, and the huntsman embraced him in his joy. "Apprentice," he cried, "what is your idea? Are you going to disguise yourself in my lady's clothes, and save her? God has inspired you to do this; but you shall not go alone; I will go into captivity with you, and stand by you as your best friend; as long as I am alive they shall do you no harm." "I will go with you too," exclaimed the student, "as sure as I live!"

Many arguments were needed before the Countess could be persuaded to consent to this idea. She could not bear the thought that a stranger should sacrifice himself for her; she pictured with horror the revenge which would fall on the head of the unfortunate man should the brigands ever discover their mistake. But at last her scruples were overcome, partly by the young man's earnest pleading, and partly by her own conviction that, once she had escaped, she would be able to exert all her influence to rescue her deliverer; so she gave in. The huntsman and the other travellers accompanied Felix into the student's room, where he quickly threw on some of the Countess's clothes. The huntsman added a few finishing touches in the way of

some false curls belonging to the maid, and when a hat was placed on the top of these, they all protested that Felix could never be recognised. Even the compass-maker swore that, if he met him in the street, he would promptly raise his hat, without the least suspicion that he was bowing to his staunch comrade.

Meanwhile the Countess, with the help of her maid, had provided herself with clothes from the young goldsmith's knapsack. With a hat crammed down over her eyes, a staff in her hand, and the bundle on her back, she was completely disguised, and at any other time the travellers would have laughed not a little at this comical masquerade. The new apprentice thanked Felix with tears in her eyes, and promised him speedy help.

"I have only one more request to make," answered Felix: "there is a small box in this knapsack which you are carrying on your back; take the utmost care of it, for I should be eternally miserable if it were lost. I want to take it to my foster-mother, and——"

"Godfrey, the huntsman, knows my castle," she answered; "everything shall be restored to you there safe and sound, for I hope that you will come in person, my noble lad, to receive my husband's thanks and my own."

Before Felix could answer, the harsh voices of the brigands were heard on the stairs; they shouted out that the truce was at an end, and that all was ready for the Countess's departure. The huntsman went down to them, and explained that he would never leave his lady, but would rather go anywhere with them than appear before his lord without her. The student also announced that he wished to accompany the Countess. They consulted together about this, and at length agreed to it, on the condition that the huntsman should at once

give up his arms; they also stipulated that the other travellers should remain quite quiet while the Countess was being led away.

Felix drew down the veil which was tied round his hat, and, taking a seat in the corner, awaited the appearance of the brigands with his head in his hand, in the attitude of one in great trouble. The travellers had withdrawn to the other room, but could see what occurred from where they were; the huntsman sat in the other corner of the room assigned to the Countess, apparently overcome with grief, but in reality keeping a watch on all that went on. When they had sat thus for some minutes, the door opened, and a handsome, richly-dressed man, of some six and thirty years of age, entered the room. He wore a kind of military uniform, with an order on his breast and a sword at his side, and in his hand he held a hat, of which the feathers swept the ground. Directly he had entered the room two of his men guarded the door.

He advanced towards Felix with a low bow, apparently somewhat embarrassed in the presence of a lady of such rank, and began to speak several times before he was satisfied as to what he ought to say. "Gracious lady," he said, "there are certain situations which must be endured in patience; you are now in a position of this kind. Do not think that I would for a moment forget what is due to so distinguished a lady; everything shall be done for your comfort, and you shall have nothing to complain of, except, perhaps, of the shock you have sustained this evening." Here he stopped, as if he expected an answer, but as Felix maintained a patient silence he continued: "Do not regard me as a common thief; I am no cut-throat; I am an unfortunate man who, owing to contrary circumstances, has been

forced to this kind of life. We wish to leave this district for good, but we need money for the journey. It would have been easy for us to attack a party of commercial travellers or the mail coach, but then we might have inflicted irreparable trouble on several people. The Lord Count, your husband, has lately inherited five hundred thousand dollars. We ask for twenty thousand florins of this superfluous fortune, and this is surely a just and modest demand. You will, therefore, have the goodness to write at once to your husband, and inform him, in an unsealed letter, that we are detaining you, in order that he may pay down this sum as soon as possible; otherwise—you understand me?—we should be obliged to treat you somewhat more severely. The payment will not be received unless it is brought here by one solitary man, under an oath of most strict secrecy.”

This scene was watched with the most strained attention by all the guests in the forest tavern, and, above all, by the Countess. She thought every minute that the youth who had sacrificed himself for her might betray himself. She was firmly determined to buy his freedom at a large price, but she was also as firmly determined that nothing in the world would induce her to go a single yard with the brigands. She had found a knife in the goldsmith's coat pocket, and this she held tightly in her hand, ready to die rather than expose herself to such ignominy. Felix was no less anxious than she was. It is true that he was strengthened and comforted by the thought that it was a manly and worthy act to succour an oppressed and helpless woman in this manner, but he feared that every movement, every word he said, would betray him. His fear increased when the brigand suggested that he should write a letter.

What should he write ? What title should he give the Count ? How should he express himself without giving himself away ?

But his fear reached its height when the brigand chief laid paper and pen before him, and begged him to put back his veil, and write.

Felix did not know how prettily the costume he was wearing suited him ; had he been conscious of this he would not have had the least fear of any discovery, for when he was at last obliged to put back his veil the gentleman in the uniform seemed struck by the beauty of the lady's somewhat manly and fearless features, and appeared to regard her with even more respect than heretofore. This did not escape the young goldsmith's keen vision ; comforted by the thought that at least at this crisis no discovery was to be feared, he seized the pen, and wrote to his assumed husband according to a form which he had once read in an old book. His letter ran :

“ My Lord and Husband,—I, unhappy woman that I am, have been held up in the middle of the night, on my journey ; the people who have assaulted me in this manner are of a kind whom I cannot credit with any good intentions. They mean to detain me till you, my Lord Count, have paid down the sum of twenty thousand florins for my ransom ; they also stipulate that you shall make no complaint to those in authority, nor apply to them for help, and that you shall send the money to the forest tavern in the Spessart by the hand of one man. If you do not concur to this I am threatened with a longer and more cruel captivity.

“ I beseech you to send speedy help to your unhappy wife.”

He handed this wonderful letter to the brigand chief, who read it through with approval. "Now it simply depends on your decision," he continued, "whether your waiting-maid or your huntsman shall accompany you. I shall send one of these back to my lord, your husband, with this letter."

"The huntsman and this gentleman here are to accompany me," answered Felix.

"Very well," he replied, and, going to the door, he called the maid; "then give this lady her instructions as to what she has to do."

The maid appeared, trembling with agitation. Felix also turned pale when he reflected how easily he still might betray himself, but an incomprehensible courage, which once more strengthened him at this crisis, loosened his tongue. "I have no further instructions for you," he said, "except to tell you to implore the Count, as soon as possible, to rescue me from my unhappy situation."

"And," continued the brigand, "you may most emphatically and distinctly impress upon the Lord Count that he must keep absolute silence, and take no measures against us, until his wife is restored to him. Our spies will inform us soon enough of any such steps, and I shall then hold myself no longer responsible for my actions."

The terrified waiting-maid promised everything. She was then told to make up a few articles of clothing and some clean linen into a bundle for the Countess, as she could not be encumbered with much baggage, and when this had been done, the brigand chief commanded the lady, with a bow, to follow him. Felix rose, the huntsman and the student followed him, and all three descended the stairs, escorted by the brigand chief.

A number of horses stood in front of the tavern : one was assigned to the huntsman ; another, a handsome little animal, was prepared with a side-saddle for the Countess ; while a third was set apart for the student. The captain lifted the young goldsmith on to his horse, and, tying him firmly to the saddle, mounted his own steed. He placed himself on the lady's right, while one of the brigands mounted guard on her left ; the huntsman and the student were surrounded in like manner. When the remainder of the band had mounted their horses, their leader gave the signal for the start with a shrill-sounding whistle, and the whole pack of them had soon disappeared in the forest.

The party who were assembled in the upper room began now to recover somewhat from their fright. Indeed, their spirits might have risen considerably, as is often the case after some great misfortune or sudden danger, had their minds not been entirely absorbed in the thought of the three companions who had just been led away before their eyes. They all expressed their admiration for the young goldsmith, and the Countess even wept tears of emotion when she reflected what an inestimable debt of gratitude she owed this person, to whom she had never shown any kindness, whom, in fact, she did not even know. It was a comfort to them all to know that the gallant huntsman and the stout-hearted student had accompanied him, and could console the young man if he felt too unhappy ; indeed, it was not beyond a possibility that the wily forester would be able to contrive some means of escape. The Countess resolved, as she was bound by no oath to the brigands, to travel back with all speed to her husband, and do all she could to find out the whereabouts of the prisoners, and to set them free ; the carter promised to ride at

once to Aschaffenburg, and set the magistrates on the track of the brigands; the compass-maker, however, wished to continue his journey.

The travellers were not disturbed again during the night; the stillness of death reigned in the tavern, where only a short time before such a scene of terror had been enacted. In the morning, however, when the Countess's servants went downstairs to make everything ready for their departure, they returned in all haste to announce that they had found the landlady and her servants in a miserable plight; they were lying bound in the taproom, and were begging for assistance.

The travellers looked at one another in astonishment when they heard this. "What!" cried the compass-maker, "so these people are innocent after all? We have wronged them in holding them to be the accomplices of these brigands."

"I will be hanged in their stead," returned the carter, "if we were not right after all; this is all a deception in order that they may not be convicted. Do you not remember the suspicious appearance of this place? Do you not recollect how, when I wanted to go downstairs, the dog, who had evidently been trained to the business, would not let me pass, and how the landlady and the houseboy appeared at once, and angrily asked me what I was about? Still, that was lucky for us, at least for the Lady Countess. If things had not looked so suspicious in this tavern, and if the landlady had inspired us with more confidence, we should never have joined forces and remained awake. The brigands would have attacked us in our sleep, or, at the very least, they would have kept watch at our doors, and this exchange with that brave young lad could never have been possible."

They were all of the carter's opinion, and determined to inform the authorities about the landlady and her servants, but, in order to be the more sure of being able to do this, they resolved that there must be no noticeable change in their behaviour. The servants went downstairs with the carter, and loosed the bands of the brigand's accomplices with as much appearance of pity and sympathy as they were able to assume. In order to propitiate her guests still further the landlady only made out a very small bill for each, and invited them to return as soon as possible.

The carter paid his bill, said farewell to his fellow-victims, and started on his way. The two apprentices were the next to take their departure. Light as was the goldsmith's bundle it weighed not a little on the lady's fragile shoulders. But there was a still heavier weight on her heart when they reached the front door, and the landlady stretched out her crime-stained hand to say good-bye. "Why, what a young stripling you are," she exclaimed as she looked at the slender youth; "fancy a handsome fellow of your tender years being allowed to tramp the world alone! You must be a bad penny, whom the master has turned out of his workshop. Well, it is no business of mine; say a good word for me when you get home. A good journey to you!"

So great was the Countess's fear and tremor that she did not dare to answer, lest her gentle voice should betray her. The compass-maker, noticing this, took his comrade by the arm, said farewell to the landlady, and started a merry song as he stepped out towards the forest.

"At last I am safe!" exclaimed the Countess when they had gone some hundred paces. "Every moment I thought the woman would recognise me, and tell her

servants to seize me. Oh, how grateful I am to you all ! You must come to my castle also, and join your fellow-traveller there."

The compass-maker acquiesced, and as they were still talking the Countess's carriage overtook them. The door was quickly opened, the Countess slipped inside, said good-bye once more to the young apprentice, and the carriage drove away.

About the same time the brigands and their prisoners had reached the encampment of the band. They had followed an unfrequented forest path at a sharp trot ; they did not exchange a word with their captives, and only whispered to one another at rare intervals when there was a deviation in their route. They made a halt eventually at the entrance of a deep woody gorge. The brigands dismounted, and their leader lifted the goldsmith from his horse, and, apologising for the hard and impetuous ride, inquired whether the gracious lady were greatly exhausted.

Felix answered, as gently as possible, that he was longing to repose himself, and the captain offered him the support of his arm for the descent into the gorge. The way led down a steep slope, and the footpath by which the descent was made was so narrow and precipitous that the chief had more than once to support the lady in order that she might not run any danger of falling. At last they arrived at the bottom. Felix saw in the faint light of dawn a small and narrow valley, at most a hundred paces in circumference, which lay in a deep basin of high rocks. There were some six or eight huts in this gorge built of planks and logs. A few dirty women peered inquisitively out of these dens, and a pack of twelve huge hounds, with innumerable puppies, jumped round the new arrivals, barking and howling

vociferously. The captain conducted the would-be Countess into the best of these huts, and told her that this had been set apart for her exclusive use ; he also acceded to the request which Felix made, that the huntsman and the student might be left with him.

Deerskins and mats had been spread out upon the floor of the hut, and served the joint purpose of carpets and seats. The furniture of this princely palace consisted of a few pots and pans, roughly hewn out of pieces of wood, an old rifle, and in the far corner a couch, put together from a few boards, and covered with woollen blankets, hardly worthy to be called a bed. It was not till they were left alone in this wretched hovel that the three prisoners had time to think over their strange plight. Felix, though not for a moment regretting his noble action, was, nevertheless, in great anxiety concerning the future should his disguise be discovered, and was about to relieve his feelings in loud lamentations. The huntsman, however, went hastily up to him, and whispered : " For God's sake, be quiet, my dear fellow ; do you not realise that they are probably listening to every word ? "

" And every word of our conversation, even the sound of our voices, might arouse their suspicions," added the student. There was nothing else for poor Felix to do but to weep quietly.

" Believe me, Master Huntsman," he said, " I do not weep from fear of the brigands, nor because I am frightened by the miserable appearance of this hovel ; no, it is quite another trouble which oppresses me. How easily the Countess might forget what I told her in such haste ; and then they may think I am a thief, and I shall be eternally miserable."

" But what is it which causes you so much anxiety ? "

asked the huntsman, surprised at the young man's manner, for until now he had conducted himself with so much courage and strength.

"Listen, and you will be able to bear witness for me," answered Felix. "My father was a skilled goldsmith in Nüremberg, and my mother had formerly been in the service of a lady of high rank as maid; when she married my father she was provided for in the most generous manner by the Countess whom she had served. This lady was always attached to my parents, and when I came into the world she was my godmother, and gave me a beautiful present. But when I was still quite young my parents died, one after another, of a contagious disease, and as I was left quite alone in the world it was settled that I should be placed in an orphanage. My lady godmother, however, hearing of our misfortune, volunteered to take charge of me, and sent me to school. When I was old enough she wrote to ask me if I would not like to learn my father's trade. I was delighted at the idea, so she apprenticed me to a master at Wurzburg. I was skilful at the work, and soon became so good at it that I was given my diploma, and was now in a position to travel. I wrote to inform my lady godmother of this, and she answered me with all despatch. At the same time she sent me some magnificent jewels, telling me to make them up into a beautiful ornament, which I was to bring her in person as a proof of my skill, and she would then give me the money for my journey. I have never in my life seen my lady godmother, and you can imagine how I have looked forward to this. I worked day and night at the ornament, with the result that I made something so beautiful and so delicate that even the master was astonished. When it was finished I packed it carefully at the bottom

of my knapsack, said farewell to my master, and set out along the road towards my lady godmother's castle. Then," he continued, bursting into tears, "these abominable men came, and destroyed all my hopes; and, if your Lady Countess loses the jewellery, or forgets what I told her, and throws away my rotten little knapsack, how shall I appear before my bountiful godmother? How shall I prove my identity? How shall I ever replace those stones? I shall have lost the money for my journey also, and shall appear such an ungrateful creature to have so carelessly given away what was entrusted to my care. And, finally, who will believe me when I relate this extraordinary incident?"

"Have no fear on that account," replied the huntsman. "I do not think that there is any chance of your jewellery being lost in the Countess's hands, and, even if it should happen, she would surely make it good to her deliverer, and witness for him to the truth of his story. We will leave you now for a few hours, for we certainly need some sleep, and you also will not be sorry to rest after the agitations of the past night. Afterwards let us have a chat, and forget our misfortunes for a time, or, better still, let us think how we can escape."

They left him, and Felix remained alone, and tried to follow the huntsman's advice.

When the huntsman returned with the student after a few hours, he found his young friend considerably refreshed, and in better spirits than before. He told the goldsmith that the captain had said the lady should receive every attention, and that in a few minutes one of the women whom they had seen in the encampment, would bring the Countess some coffee, and offer her services as maid. They determined, in order to remain undisturbed, not to accept these civilities, and when the

hideous old gipsy woman came in to lay the breakfast, and asked, with a friendly grin, whether there were anything else she could do, Felix made her a sign to depart, and, as she still hesitated, the huntsman chased her out of the hut. The student then continued to relate what else they had seen in the brigand's camp. "The hut which you occupy, most beautiful Lady Countess," he said, "seems to have been originally intended for the captain. It is not so large, but better furnished than the others. There are six besides this one, which are inhabited by the women and children, for there are seldom more than six of the brigands at home. One of them is on guard not far from this hut, the other on the upper road, while a third keeps watch at the entrance to the gorge. These are relieved by three others every two hours. Besides this, each one has two hounds lying at his side, and they are all so wide awake that one can hardly put a foot outside the hut without their beginning to bark. I have no hope of being able to slip through them."

"Do not make me so sad ; I was feeling more cheerful after my sleep," replied Felix. "Do not let us give up all hope, and if you are afraid that we shall be betrayed we had better talk of something else now, and not make ourselves unhappy before there is any reason. You, my learned gentleman, began telling us a story in the tavern ; please continue it, for we have time to talk now."

"I can hardly remember what it was," answered the young man.

"You were telling us the story of the Cold Heart, and you stopped where the landlord and the other gambler had just turned Peter, the charcoal-burner, out at the door."

"All right ; now I remember," he replied. "Well, if you wish to hear some more, I will continue."

THE COLD HEART.

PART II.

WHEN Peter went out into his glass works on Monday morning, he not only found his workman there, but some other people whom it is no pleasure to see—namely, the magistrate, and three officers of justice. The magistrate wished Peter good-morning, asked him how he had slept, and then produced an enormous register, containing the list of Peter's creditors. "Can you pay or not?" asked the magistrate severely. "And be quick about it, for I have no time to waste." Then Peter was in despair, declared that he had nothing more, and allowed the magistrate to set a valuation on all his goods and chattels, workshop and stables, carriage and horses. While the magistrate and the officers of justice were going their round, testing this and that, and estimating the value of everything, he thought to himself: "Fir-tree Knoll is not far off; as the *little* man has not helped me I will have a try with the *big* one." He raced off to Fir-tree Knoll with as much speed as if the officers of justice were at his heels. It seemed to him, as he ran past the spot where he had his first conversation with the glass bogey, that an invisible hand was stretched out to stop him; but he wrenched himself free, and tore on to the boundary, whose locality he had carefully committed to memory. Hardly had he shouted in a breathless voice: "Dutch Michael! Master Michael!" than the gigantic raftsmen stood before him, with an iron pole in his hand.

"You are coming?" he said, with a laugh. "Did

they wish to skin you alive, and sell you to your creditors? There, there, don't worry; your whole trouble comes, as I told you, from the glass mannikin, with his pious, Separatist ideas. If one gives a present, one ought to give generously, and not like this pinch-penny. But come," he continued, turning away in the direction of the forest, "follow me to my house, and we will see if we can strike a bargain."

"Strike a bargain?" thought Peter. "What can he want from me; how can I supply him with anything? Am I to serve him in any way, or what is he after?" They first scaled a steep ridge of the forest, and then found themselves at the entrance to a deep, dark, precipitous gorge, down which Dutch Michael bounded from rock to rock, as if they had been a flight of the smoothest marble steps; then Peter almost fainted, for when the Dutchman had reached the bottom he made himself as tall as a church steeple, and stretching an arm as long as a mast, with a hand as broad as the taproom table, he cried in a voice which reverberated like the tolling of a bell: "Just lean on my hand, hold on to my fingers, and you will not fall." Peter tremblingly did as he was told, sat down on the hand, and clung to the giant's thumb.

He sank deeper and deeper down, but to his astonishment it seemed to grow no darker; on the contrary, the daylight was more brilliant in the gorge, and he could not bear it in his eyes for long. The lower Peter descended the smaller did Dutch Michael become, and now stood in his original stature before a house which was neither better nor worse than the home of many a well-to-do peasant in the Black Forest. The room to which Peter was conducted seemed no

different from the rooms of other people except that it was deserted.

The wooden clock on the wall, the enormous stove, the broad benches, and the utensils on the dresser were the same as they are everywhere. Michael made him a sign to take a seat at the huge table, and then went away, returning in a couple of minutes with some glasses and a jug of wine. He poured it out, and they began to talk. Dutch Michael began to tell his companion about the joys of travel, and entered into such enthusiastic descriptions of foreign countries, and of beautiful towns and rivers, that Peter was consumed with a great longing, which he frankly confessed to the Dutchman.

"If your whole being were full of enterprise and energy, a few beats of your stupid heart might make you tremble; and all those fastidious points of honour and feelings of remorse or sorrow—why should a sensible fellow trouble his head about such things? Did you feel any sensation in your head when you were latterly called a cheat and a rogue? Had you any pain in your stomach when the magistrate arrived to turn you out of house and home? Tell me, what was it which hurt you?"

"My heart," said Peter, pressing his hand to his thumping side, for his heart seemed to be beating backward and forward with terror.

"You have—do not be offended—you have thrown away many hundred florins on evil beggars and other riff-raff; and what good has it done you? They blessed you for it, and wished you long life. Did it give you better health? You could have had medical attendance for half the sum you wasted. A blessing! A nice sort of blessing when one is sold up and turned

out of doors. And what was it which moved you to put a hand in your pocket every time a beggar held out his ragged cap? Your heart, always your heart, not your eyes nor your tongue nor your arm nor your legs, but your heart; you took it, as the saying very rightly goes, too much to heart."

"But how can one altogether rid oneself of this habit? I take great pains to stifle it, and my heart always continues to beat, and to hurt me."

"Of course, you," he cried, laughing, "you poor fellow, cannot help it; but give me that thumping thing, and you will see how well it will be with you."

"You? My heart?" yelled Peter with horror. "Why, I should die on the spot! Never!"

"Yes; you would certainly die if one of your blessed surgeons performed an operation; and tried to take your heart out of your body; but in my hands, it is another matter; come in here, and see for yourself." With these words he rose, opened a door, and led Peter into another room. There were strange palpitations in his heart as he crossed the threshold, but he did not heed them, so marvellous and unexpected was the sight presented to his eyes. There were rows of glasses, filled with a liquid fluid, standing on a number of wooden shelves, and in each glass lay a heart; there were labels stuck on all the glasses, with names written upon them, and these Peter read with great curiosity. There were fat Ezekiel's heart, the heart of the Ball-room King, the heart of the chief forester; besides, there were six hearts belonging to usurers, eight belonging to recruiting officers, three belong to stock-brokers—in short, it was a collection of the most notable hearts within a circuit of twenty leagues.

"Look!" said Dutch Michael, "all these have

thrown off life's worries and sorrows; none of these hearts are moved any longer by trouble or care, and their original possessors are well content to be rid of such restless guests."

"But what do they have in their side instead?" asked Peter, who felt almost giddy with all that he had seen.

"This," was the answer as the giant produced from a drawer a heart of stone.

"Really?" he replied and could not repress a shudder which ran through his whole body. "A marble heart? But just think, Master Michael, how cold that must be in one's side."

"Of course, but merely agreeably cool. Why should a heart be warm? Its warmth is of no good in winter—a good glass of brandy does one much more good than a warm heart; and in summer, when it is stuffy and hot, you have no idea how a heart like this cools one. And, as I said, a heart of this kind is not moved by either worry or fear, a senseless feeling of pity, or any other grief."

"And that is all you can give me?" asked Peter crossly. "I hoped for money, and you give me a stone."

"Well, I think a hundred thousand florins will be enough for you to begin with. If you lay it out to advantage you will soon become a millionaire."

"A hundred thousand!" exclaimed the poor charcoal-burner with joy. "Well, let there be no more riotous feelings in my heart, and we shall soon have done with one another. All right, Michael; give me the stone, and the money, and you may relieve me of all disquiet."

"I always thought you were a sensible lad," answered the Dutchman, with a friendly smile. "Come, and let

us have another drink, and then I will count out your money." So they sat down once more to their wine in the other room, and drank and drank again, till Peter fell into a deep sleep.

Peter, the charcoal-burner, was awakened by the merry blast of a post-horn, and, behold! he was sitting in a beautiful carriage, driving along a broad road, and as he leant out of the window he saw the Black Forest lying far behind him in the blue distance. At first he could not believe that it could be he himself who was sitting in the carriage—for not even his clothes were the same which he had worn the day before—but he remembered everything so clearly that he put an end to these reflections, crying: "I am Peter, the charcoal-burner, that is clear, and no one else."

He was astonished at himself for not feeling more pain at this first parting from his quiet home and from the woods where he had lived so long. Even when he thought of his mother, who was now helpless and in misery, he could not squeeze out a tear or even a sigh; he felt so indifferent about it all. "Oh, of course," he said, "tears and sighs, home-sickness and yearnings come from the heart, and, thanks to Dutch Michael, mine is cold, and made of stone."

He put his hand to his side, and everything was quiet there; nothing moved. "If he has kept his word as satisfactorily about the hundred thousand florins as about the heart I shall be in luck," he said, and began to search the carriage. He found articles of clothing of every kind that he could wish for, but no money. At last he alighted on a bag filled with many thousand dollars in gold and notes of credit to all the business firms in every town of any size. "Now I have got what I wanted," he thought, settled himself

cosily in a corner of the carriage, and drove on into the wide world.

For two years he drove all over the world, and saw to right and to left of him buildings of every kind; when he stopped he would only glance up at the name of his hotel, and then rush off into the town to see all the sights. But nothing gave him any pleasure, neither pictures, nor buildings, nor music, nor dancing; nothing appealed to his heart of stone; his eyes and ears seemed deadened to all beauty. Nothing remained to him but the joy of eating, drinking, and sleeping; and this was his life: travelling in an aimless manner through the world, eating for amusement, and sleeping from sheer boredom. Now and then he certainly recollected that he had been merrier and more contented when he had been poor, and was obliged to work for his living. In those days he had enjoyed the view in the valley; music and song had had power to please him; he would look forward for many hours to the simple meal his mother brought him when he was at work. When he looked back in this way over past years, it occurred to him as very strange that he could never laugh now, although formerly he had laughed at the smallest joke. If other people were laughing he would twist up his mouth, but his heart did not smile. He certainly felt very calm, but he could not be said to be contented. It was not home-sickness or sadness, but his blank, weary, joyless existence which at length drove him back to his native land.

As he drove across from Strassburg, and once more saw his home in the dense forest; once more gazed at the powerful figures and frank, friendly faces of the Black Forest native; once more heard the well-known dialect with its broad, deep but pleasant sound, then

at last he felt once more a sensation in the region of his heart, for his blood was coursing rapidly through his veins, and he thought he should cry and laugh at the same time. But how could he be so foolish; had he not a heart of stone? And stones are dead, and neither smile nor weep.

He went straightway to Dutch Michael, who received him like an old friend. "Michael," he said to him, "I have travelled now, and seen many things, but it is all a stupid business, and I am heartily weary of it. It is true that that stony thing which I carry in my side protects me from many evils. I never lose my temper, I am never sad, but I also never feel really happy, and I seem to be only half alive. Could you not make this heart of stone a little more pliable? Or—oh, you had better give me back my old heart. I had been used to it for five and twenty years, and if it did play silly tricks with me sometimes it was, nevertheless, a light and merry heart."

The spirit of the forest gave a grim and bitter laugh. "Once you are dead, Peter Munk," he replied, "you shall not fail to have it back; you shall then once more have a soft and movable heart, and you shall then feel what is the result—joy or pain. But up here it can never be yours again! Yes, Peter, of course you have travelled, but with the life you led it could not possibly do you any good. Settle down somewhere here in the forest, build a house, marry, and lay your goods out to some advantage; you only needed some work; you were bored because you were idle, and now you throw all the blame on your innocent heart." Peter realised that Michael was in the right concerning his idleness, and made up his mind to become richer and richer. The Dutchman gave him

another hundred thousand florins, and they parted the best of friends.

A rumour soon spread through the Black Forest that Peter, the charcoal-burner, or Gambling Peter, had come back, and was even richer than before. The tide turned now, as it always does. When he was reduced to pauperism they had thrust him out of doors, but now, when he made his first reappearance on a Sunday afternoon, they shook him by the hand, they admired his horse, asked him about his journey, and when he once more began to gamble in hard dollars with fat Ezekiel he rose as high in their esteem as he had ever been. He was no longer in the glass trade but in the timber business, which was only for appearance sake. His chief occupation was speculating in corn and money. Gradually half the Black Forest was in his debt, but he only lent money at ten per cent. interest, or sold corn, for three times its value, to poor people who could not pay at once. He was now great friends with the magistrate, and if anyone were a day late in paying Peter Munk the former would ride off with his constables, set a valuation on every stick and stone, sell everything with great promptitude, and drive father, mother, and children into the forest. At first this caused rich Peter some annoyance, for the poor, homeless creatures would besiege his door in large numbers, the men begging for mercy, the women making vain attempts to soften his stony heart, and the children whimpering for a piece of bread. But when he had procured himself a couple of well-trained bloodhounds this caterwauling, as he called it, soon ceased. He whistled, and set the dogs on them, and the poor paupers were quickly scattered. His greatest grievance, however, was "the old woman." This was none other than

Mistress Munk, Peter's mother. She had sunk to a condition of great want and misery when her house and home had been sold, and her son, when he had returned as a rich man, had taken no notice of her. Now, she sometimes came up to his house leaning on a stick, weak, old, and decrepit. She did not dare to go in any more, for she had once been chased away, but it pained her to be obliged to live on the charity of other people, when her only son might have allowed her to spend her old age in freedom from all care and worry. The cold heart, however, was never moved by the sight of the pale, well-known features, nor by the pleading glance, the withered, outstretched hand, the frail figure. On Saturdays, when she knocked at the door, he would sullenly take out a sixpence, wrap it in a piece of paper, and convey it to her by the hands of his valet. He heard her trembling voice thanking him, and wishing that he might prosper in this world ; he heard her creep away, coughing as she went, but he thought no more about it except that he had once more wasted sixpence.

At last it occurred to Peter that he should marry. He knew that every father throughout the Black Forest would gladly bestow his daughter on him ; but he was fastidious in his choice, for he wished in this matter also to be congratulated on his luck and on his discrimination. He rode about therefore, through, the whole forest, looking here, there, and everywhere, but none of the beautiful Black Forest maidens seemed to him beautiful enough. Finally, when he had searched every ballroom in vain for the prettiest girl, he heard one day that the loveliest and most virtuous maid in all the forest was the daughter of a poor woodcutter. She lived quietly in her own little circle, managed her

father's house in a capable and industrious manner and was never to be seen in a ballroom, not even at Whitsuntide, nor at the dedication festival of a church. When Peter heard of this wonder of the Black Forest he determined to woo her, and rode to the hut, which had been described to him. The father of the beautiful Bessie received the distinguished gentleman with some surprise, and was still more astonished when he heard that rich Peter wished to become his son-in-law. He did not think twice about it, for he imagined all his worry and poverty would be at an end now, so he gave his consent without consulting beautiful Bessie, and the good child was so submissive that she became Mistress Peter Munk without any opposition.

But it did not go so well with the poor girl as she had dreamed. She thought she knew how to keep house, but she could do nothing to please her Lord Peter. She was full of pity for the poor, and as her husband was rich, she never dreamt it could be a sin to give a poor beggar-woman a copper or to refresh an old man with a snack of something. But one day, when Peter noticed this, he said roughly, with an angry glance: "Why do you waste my goods on paupers and vagabonds? Did you bring anything with you into my house, that you can afford to give anything away? Your father's beggar's staff would warm no one's soup, and yet you fling the money about as if you were a princess. If you do that again you shall feel my hand." Beautiful Bessie wept in the solitude of her chamber over her husband's hard nature, and she often longed to be at home in her father's miserable hut, rather than live with this rich but stingy and hard-hearted Peter. Ah! had she known that he had a marble heart, and was incapable of loving either her

or any other person, she would not have been surprised. But now, if, as she sat at the door, a beggar came by and, baring his head, began the oft-repeated phrase, she tightly closed her eyes in order not to see his misery, and clenched her hands together so that they should not unconsciously find their way to her pocket and bring out a halfpenny. So it came to pass that pretty Bessie was abused throughout the forest, and it was said she was even stingier than Peter Munk. One day Mistress Bessie was again sitting in front of the house, humming a song as she span, for she was in good spirits, because it was fine weather, and Lord Peter was taking a long ride over hill and dale. Then a little old man came up the path carrying a large and heavy sack, and she heard him coughing from afar. Mistress Bessie looked at him sympathetically, thinking that such a tiny old man should not be so heavily laden.

Meanwhile the little man had tottered nearer, coughing with every step, and when he reached Mistress Bessie he almost collapsed under the weight of the sack. "Oh, have mercy on me, mistress, and give me just a little drink of water," said the little man; "I can go no farther, and shall die of this misery."

"But you should no longer carry such heavy loads at your age," said Mistress Bessie.

"That is true if I were not obliged to run errands on account of my poverty and in order to get a living," he answered. "Ah! a rich lady like you does not know the agonies of poverty, nor how good it is to have a cold drink in such heat as this."

When she heard this, she hurried into the house, took a jug from the shelf, and filled it with water; then as she was returning, and was only a few paces from the little man, she saw how miserable and poverty-

stricken he looked as he sat huddled upon his sack. The sight filled her with deep pity, and, reflecting that her husband was not at home, she put the water jug aside, took a tankard, and filled it with wine, then, with the addition of a loaf of rye bread, she brought it to the old man. "There, a sip of wine will do you more good now that you are so old," she said. "But do not drink in such haste, and eat some bread with it."

The little man looked at her in astonishment, and large tears welled up in his eyes. He took a long draught, and said: "I have lived many years, but I have seen few people who were so sympathetic as you, Mistress Bessie, and who knew how to use the good things of this world with such beautiful and heartfelt generosity. It will go well with you on earth, I am sure; a heart such as yours does not fail to be rewarded."

"No; and you shall have your reward on the spot," cried a fearful voice, and when she looked round she saw her Lord Peter standing there, his face purple with rage.

"So you even pour out my best wine for beggars, and offer my tankard to the lips of vagrants? There! Take your reward!" Mistress Bessie threw herself at his feet, and begged for pardon, but the cold heart knew no pity; he turned round the whip which he was holding in his hand, and dealt her such a blow on her beautiful forehead with the ebony handle, that she sank lifeless in the old man's arms. When he saw this he seemed to repent him immediately of his act; he bent down to see if there were still any life in her but the little man said in a well-known voice: "Do not trouble, charcoal-burner; she was the most beautiful and the sweetest flower in the Black Forest, but you have trampled on her, and she will never bloom again."

Then the blood fled from Peter's face, and he said :
' So it is you, Master Treasure Bogey ! Well, what is done, is done ; and it was bound to come ; but I hope you will not prosecute me as a murderer."

" Miserable wretch ! " answered the glass mannikin, " what good would it do me to bring your mortal remains to the gallows ? It is not an earthly judge whom you have to fear, but another and severer one, for you have sold your soul to the Evil One."

" And if I have sold my soul," exclaimed Peter, " where does the fault lie if not with you and your false treasure ? It was you, you deceitful spirit, who led me to my ruin, and you who forced me to seek help elsewhere, and you are responsible for the whole business." But hardly had he uttered these words than the glass bogey began to grow and swell out until he was a tall, big man with eyes the size of soup plates, and his mouth was like a red-hot oven, out of which flashed flames of fire. Peter flung himself on his knees, and his heart of stone did not prevent him from trembling in every limb like an aspen leaf. The spirit of the forest seized him by the scruff of his neck with vulture's claws, and swung him round like a whirlwind of dry leaves, flinging him at last with such force to the ground that all his ribs cracked.

" Worm ! " he cried in a voice which resounded like thunder, " I could grind you to pieces if I wished it, for you have sinned against the lord of the forest, but for the sake of this dead woman, who gave me food and drink, you shall have eight days' reprieve. If you do not turn to what is good in that time, I will shatter your every limb, and you shall pass away in your sins."

Evening had already closed in before some men

came by, and found rich Peter Munk lying on the ground. They turned him this way and that, to see if there were any breath left in him, but for a long time their efforts were in vain. Finally one of them went into the house, and fetched some water, which they sprinkled over him. Then Peter drew a deep breath, opened his eyes, looked vacantly round him for some time, and then asked for Mistress Bessie, but no one had seen her. He thanked the men for their help, crept into his house, and searched everywhere, but Mistress Bessie was nowhere to be found, and what he had thought to be a dream turned out to be a horrible reality. Now that he was left quite alone he was haunted by strange thoughts. He was afraid of nothing, because his heart was, of course, cold, but when he meditated on his wife's death, his own departure obtruded itself upon his mind, and he reflected what a load he would have to take with him, how burdened he would be with the tears of the poor, with all their curses, with the cries of those poor wretches whom he had hounded out of the place, with his mother's silent despair, with the blood of good, beautiful Bessie; and if he could never justify himself in the eyes of the old man her father, when he should come and ask: "Where is my daughter your wife?" how should he ever bear that other question which is addressed to all the woods, the seas, the mountains, as well as to every human soul?

This thought haunted him all night in his dreams, and every minute he would start up at the sound of a sweet voice, which called out to him: "Peter, get yourself a warmer heart!" and when he awoke he would quickly shut his eyes again, for he knew by the voice that it was Mistress Bessie who was giving him this warning. The next day he went down to the inn,

to find distraction for his thoughts, and there he met fat Ezekiel. He sat down with him, and they talked of this and that, about the fine weather and the war, about the taxes, and finally about death, and about people who had died suddenly here and there. Then Peter asked the fat man what were his opinions about death and the after life. Ezekiel answered that the body was buried, but the soul either went up into heaven or down into hell.

"Then is one's heart buried also?" asked Peter eagerly.

"Yes, of course, that is buried too."

"But if one has not got a heart any longer?" continued Peter.

Ezekiel looked at him in terror as he said this. "What do you mean? Are you making fun of me? Do you think I have no heart?"

"Oh, you have heart enough, as solid as a stone," replied Peter.

Ezekiel looked at him in astonishment, glanced round to see if anyone had heard, and then said: "How do you know that? Or does yours, possibly, beat no longer?"

"It beats no longer, at least not here in my side!" answered Peter Munk. "But tell me, now that you know what I mean, what will happen to our hearts?"

"Why do you worry about this, comrade?" asked Ezekiel, laughing. "You have still your life to live in this world, and that should suffice. That is just what is so comfortable about our cold hearts; such thoughts as these do not frighten us."

"Quite true; but still one thinks about it, and, even though I no longer know what fear is, I remember

quite well how frightened I was at the idea of hell when I was an innocent little boy."

"Well, we shall not exactly fare very well," said Ezekiel. "I once asked a schoolmaster about it, and he told me that all hearts were weighed after death to see how heavily they had sinned. Those which were light ascended, the heavy ones descended, and I should think our stones would be a good weight."

"Oh, I should think so," returned Peter, "and it even makes me somewhat uncomfortable to find how immovable and how utterly indifferent my heart is when I think of these things."

This was the conversation he had with Ezekiel; and the following night he heard five or six times the well-known voice lisping into his ears: "Peter, get yourself a warmer heart!" He felt no remorse at having killed her, but when he told his servants that his wife had gone on a journey, he always wondered where she had gone to. This state of things continued for six days, and every night he heard the same voice, which made him think of the spirit of the forest, and his threat; but on the seventh morning he sprang out of bed, exclaiming: "Well, now I will see whether I cannot get a warmer heart, for this unimpressionable stone in my side only makes my life a very dreary blank." He quickly put on his best clothes, mounted his horse, and rode towards Fir-tree Knoll.

Arrived at Fir-tree Knoll, where the trees were more closely planted, he dismounted, tied up his horse, and rapidly walked to the summit of the hillock, and there, standing in front of the huge pine-tree, he recited the little verse:

"Treasure Bogey, in pine wood green,
How many centuries you have seen ;
Yours is the land where pines are grown,
Only to Sunday bairns you're shown."

The little glass-blower then appeared ; he did not look as friendly and confiding as usual, however, but seemed sullen and sad ; he was wearing a tiny coat of black glass, and a long crape band round his hat, and Peter knew well for whom he was mourning.

"What do you want from me, Peter Munk ?" he asked in an apathetic voice.

"I can have still one more wish, Master Treasure Bogey," answered Peter, with eyes cast down.

"Have hearts of stone the power to wish ?" he inquired. "You have everything which a scoundrel like you can need ; I am not likely to grant your wish."

"But you offered me three wishes, and I still have one left."

"But I can deny it if it is foolish," continued the spirit of the forest. "Go on, however ; I will hear what it is you want."

"Well, take away this lifeless stone and give me back my living heart," said Peter.

"Did I strike the bargain with you ?" asked the little glass-blower. "Am I Dutch Michael, who gives riches and cold hearts ? You must seek your heart from him."

"Ah, he will never give it back," replied Peter.

"You arouse my pity, bad as you are," said the glass bogey after a moment's thought, "so, as your wish is, at all events, not a foolish one, I can at least not deny you my help. Listen, then : you cannot get back your heart by force, but by means of cunning

it may not be quite impossible, for Michael is never anything but stupid Michael, although he thinks himself such a clever fellow. Go to him, therefore, straight away, and do what I tell you." He then proceeded to give him minute directions, and ended by handing him a little cross of pure glass. "He cannot endanger your life, and he will set you at liberty if you hold this before his eyes and supplicate for freedom. When you have obtained what you want come back to me here."

Peter Munk took the little cross, committed all these directions to memory, and went on to Dutch Michael's abode. He called his name three times, and the giant immediately appeared.

"So you have put an end to your wife?" he asked, with a horrible laugh. "If you had not done so she would have given all your goods away to paupers. But you will soon have to leave the country, for there will be a fine hubbub when she cannot be found. I suppose you will need money, and have come for it?"

"You have guessed correctly," answered Peter; "and a good deal this time, for America is a long way off."

Michael led him into the hut, and, opening a chest filled with gold, he took out whole rolls of money. As he was counting it out on the table Peter said: "You are a false friend, Michael, to cheat me in this manner; it was agreed that I was to have a stone in my side, and you were to have my heart."

"And is it not so?" inquired Michael in astonishment. "Can you feel your heart, then? Is it not as cold as ice? Do you ever have any sorrow or fear; are you capable of feeling remorse?"

"You have only made my heart stand still; but it

is always there in my side, and Ezekiel's too—it was he who told me that you had lied to us. You are not a man who could extract the heart out of one's side without one being aware of it, and without any danger; you must know how to bewitch people."

"But I assure you," exclaimed Michael with some irritation, "you, and Ezekiel, and all the other rich people who have had dealings with me, possess cold hearts like yours, and I keep their proper hearts in my chamber."

"Oh, how the lies slip off your tongue!" laughed Peter. "You may tell that story elsewhere. Do you not think I have seen a dozen conjuring tricks of the sort on my travels? These hearts in your room are only imitations made of wax. You are a rich fellow I own, but you cannot work witchcraft."

Then the giant lost his temper, and tore open the door of his room. "Come in, and read all the labels. Look! This one here is Peter Munk's heart. Can you not see how it beats? Can that be imitated in wax?"

"And yet it is wax," replied Peter; "a real heart does not beat like that; mine is still in my side. No, you are no good at witchcraft!"

"Well, I will prove it to you," he shouted angrily. "You shall feel for yourself that this is your heart." He took it up, tore open Peter's shirt, took the stone out of his side, and showed it to him. Then he took the heart, breathed on it, replaced it carefully where the stone had been, and immediately Peter felt its beat, and could once more rejoice at the sensation.

"What does it feel like now?" asked Michael, smiling.

"Really, you were right," answered Peter, cautiously drawing the little cross out of his pocket. "I could

never have believed that that sort of thing could be done."

"No; could you? So you see I can work witchcraft; but, come on, now I will put back the stone."

"Not so fast, Master Michael," cried Peter, taking a step backward, and holding up the cross. "Mice are caught with bacon, and this time it is you who have been taken in." And he immediately began to pray, saying whatever came into his head.

Then Michael became smaller and smaller, fell to the ground, and wriggled about like a worm, sighing and fuming, and all the hearts began to beat and to thump, so that it sounded like a watchmaker's workshop. Peter, however, was frightened, and felt quite creepy, so he tore out of the room and out of the house, and, urged forward by his terror, he clambered up the rocky wall, for he could hear that Michael was picking himself up, stamping and raging, and cursing him with horrible vehemence. When he had reached the top he raced off to Fir-tree Knoll. A fearful thunderstorm arose, and the lightning flashed to the right and to the left of him, cleaving the trees asunder, but he got safe and sound into the little glass-blower's domain.

His heart beat joyfully, and for the simple reason that *it was beating*. Then he glanced back over his past life with feelings of horror, which were akin to what he felt as he looked behind him at the raging tempest, and saw the lightning making havoc of the beautiful wood in every direction. When he thought of Mistress Bessie, his good, beautiful wife, whom he had murdered in his avarice, he felt he did indeed belong to the scum of the earth, and he was weeping

bitterly when he arrived at the little glass-blower's hill.

The Treasure Bogey was sitting under a pine-tree smoking a tiny pipe, and he looked in better spirits than before. "Why are you crying, charcoal-burner?" he asked. "Have you not secured your heart, or is the cold one still lying in your side?"

"Ah, sir," sighed Peter, "when I still had that cold heart of stone I never wept, my eyes were as dry as the earth in July, but now my old heart is almost breaking in two at what I have done. I made life a burden to my creditors, I hounded the sick and the poor away, and you yourself know well enough—how I struck her beautiful brow with my whip!"

"Peter, you have sinned deeply," said the little man. "Money and idleness have been your ruin, so much so that your heart turned to stone, and could no longer feel joy or pain, remorse or pity. But repentance brings reparation, and if I only knew that you were really sorry for the life you have led, I might still be able to do something for you."

"I want nothing more," answered Peter, hanging his head sadly; "it is all up with me now; I never will be happy again as long as I live; what should I do quite alone in the world? My mother would never forgive me for the way I have treated her; perhaps I have even brought her down to her grave, unnatural son that I am! And Bessie, my wife! You had better kill me too, Master Treasure Bogey, then I shall have done with my wretched life."

"All right," replied the mannikin; "if you wish for nothing else you may have your desire; my axe is just here." He calmly took his little pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and put it in his

pocket. Then he slowly rose to his feet, and went behind the pine-tree. Peter, however, sat down on the grass, weeping; his life was no longer worth anything to him, so he could await his death in patience. In a short time he heard the soft patter of feet behind him, and thought: "Now it will come."

"Just take a last look round, Peter Munk," cried the little man. He brushed the tears from his eyes, and, looking round, saw—his mother and Bessie, his wife, looking at him with loving eyes. Then he jumped up, crying joyfully: "You are not dead, Bessie? And are you there too, mother? Have you forgiven me?"

"They forgive you," said the little glass-blower, "because you have felt true remorse, and everything shall be forgotten now. Go home to your father's hut, and be a charcoal-burner, as you were before; if you are honest and industrious, you will learn to honour the work of your hands, and you will be more loved and respected by your neighbours than if you had ten tons of gold." With these words the little glass-blower said good-bye.

All three gave thanks to him, blessed him, and went home.

Rich Peter's magnificent house existed no longer; it had been struck by lightning, and burnt down, with everything it contained; but it was not far to his old home, and they set out in that direction without wasting many regrets on their tremendous loss.

Their astonishment, however, was beyond words when they arrived at the hut; it had turned into a lovely cottage, furnished quite simply, but with care and taste.

"The good little glass-blower has done this," exclaimed Peter.

"How lovely!" said Mistress Bessie. "And I feel much more at home here than in the big house with all those servants."

From this time forward Peter Munk became an industrious and good-hearted man. He was content with what he had, did his work without complaint, and became quite well-to-do by his own labour, besides being respected and loved throughout the forest. He no longer wrangled with Mistress Bessie; he honoured his mother; and he gave freely to the poor who knocked at his door. After a year or two his wife gave birth to a son, and Peter then went off to Fir-tree Knoll, and said his password. But the little glass-blower did not appear. "Master Treasure Bogey," he cried with a loud voice. But there was no answer; only a slight breeze rustled through the pines, and blew a few fir cones down on to the grass. "Well, I will take these as a souvenir, as you will not let yourself be seen," said Peter, and, filling his pockets with the cones, he went home; but when he took off his Sunday coat at home, and his mother emptied his pockets in order to put the coat away in a chest, four splendid rolls of money fell out, which, when opened, were found to contain real, good, new Baden dollars, with not a false one among them. That was the little glass-blower's christening present for wee Peter.

Thus they lived on in quiet content, and in after years, when Peter was a grey-haired man, he would often say: "It is better to be content with little than to have gold and many possessions with a cold heart."

Some five days had elapsed, during which time Felix, the huntsman, and the student were still in captivity

among the brigands. They were certainly well treated by the captain and his subordinates ; but, nevertheless, they longed for their release, for every day that passed increased their fear that their ruse would be discovered. In the evening of the fifth day, the huntsman announced to his fellow-victims, that he was determined to effect an escape that night, even should it cost him his life. He encouraged his companions to make a like resolution, and showed them how they might accomplish their flight. " For I shall make short work of anyone who stands in my way ; it is a case of necessity, and necessity knows no law. He shall die."

" Die ! " exclaimed Felix with horror. " Will you kill anyone ? "

" I am determined to do so if it is necessary, in order to save two human lives. You must know that I have heard the brigands whispering to one another, with anxious looks, that the forest is being scoured in search of them. The old women in their indignation have betrayed the wicked intentions of their men folk ; they reviled us, and gave us to understand that, if the brigands were attacked, we should be mercilessly put to death."

" Merciful Heaven ! " cried the lad, hiding his face in his hands at the horrible thought.

" Well, they have not got their knives to our throats yet," continued the huntsman, " therefore let us outwit them. When it is dark I shall creep out to the next sentry ; he will call out ; I shall whisper to him that the Countess has suddenly been taken ill, and when he looks round I shall fling him to the ground. Then I shall fetch you, young man, and the second one can be disposed of in the same way ; the two of us will then be able to make short work of the third."

The huntsman looked so forbidding when he said this,

that Felix felt quite frightened. He was just about to persuade him to renounce this bloodthirsty plan, when the door of the hut opened softly, and a figure quickly slipped inside. It was the captain. He closed the door again with much caution, and made a sign to the prisoners to be silent. He sat down near Felix, and said :

"My Lady Countess, you are in a bad way. My lord, your husband, has not kept his word ; he not only has not sent the ransom but he has aroused all the authorities for miles around ; bands of armed men are scouring the woods in all directions, in order to seize me and my people. I have threatened to kill you if your husband makes any attempt to attack us ; therefore he must either set small store on your life, or else he puts no faith in our oaths. Your life is in our hands, and, according to our laws, must be forfeited. What defence can you offer ? "

The prisoners stared at the floor in great perplexity ; they did not know how to answer, for Felix was well aware that any revelations concerning his disguise would only expose him to greater danger.

"It is impossible for me," continued the captain, "to endanger the life of a lady whom I honour so deeply ; therefore I have a suggestion to make, which is the only means of escape which remains to you : I will escape with you."

The two men looked at one another in surprise, nay, in amazement. The brigand, however, went on : "The majority of my men have determined to go to Italy and enlist in a band whose numbers are legion. For my part, it does not suit me to serve under anyone else, so I shall not throw in my lot with theirs. Now, if you will give me your word to speak in favour of me, my Lady

Countess, and to use your powerful connections on my behalf, I can still set you at liberty before it is too late."

Felix felt greatly embarrassed, and was silent; his honest heart recoiled from the thought of wilfully exposing this man to a danger from which he should afterwards be able to afford him no protection. As he remained silent the captain continued: "At the present moment soldiers are in great request; I will be content with the meanest office. I know that you could do much, but I demand nothing but your promise to do something for me in this business."

"Well, then," answered Felix, with downcast eyes, "I promise to do what is *in my power* to be of service to you. And, whatever happens, it will be a comfort to me to know that you have renounced this dishonest life of your own accord."

The captain kissed the kind lady's hand with much emotion, and, whispering that she must be in readiness two hours after nightfall, he left the hut with as much caution as he had entered it. The prisoners breathed more freely when he had gone.

"Truly," exclaimed the huntsman, "God has softened that man's heart. How miraculously are we to be rescued. I could never have dreamt that this would happen, nor, indeed, that I should ever have such a wonderful adventure."

"It is indeed marvellous," replied Felix. "But am I right to deceive this man? What good can my protection be to him? Tell me, huntsman, do you not think it is merely leading him to the gallows if I do not reveal who I am?"

"Tut, tut! how can you have such scruples, my dear fellow," answered the student, "after having played your part in such a masterful manner up till now? No,

you must not worry about that ; it is nothing but a case of necessity. After all, his was the crime, in the first instance, to kidnap a lady of rank in such a shameful manner on her journey, and, had it not been for you, who knows how the Countess's health would have stood it ? No, you have done no wrong ; besides, I believe the magistrates will put a good mark against his name when he himself announces that he is the chief of this band."

This last idea consoled the young goldsmith. They passed the next few hours agitated by joyful hopes, but also racked with anxiety as to the success of this plan. It was already dark, when the captain suddenly entered the hut, and, depositing a bundle of clothes on the floor, said : " My lady, in order to facilitate our flight, it is absolutely necessary that you should put on these men's clothes. Get ready, for in an hour's time we shall be starting." After saying this he left the prisoners, and the huntsman found it hard not to laugh aloud. " That will be the second change of costume," he exclaimed, " and I bet this will suit you even better than the first."

They opened the bundle, and found a handsome hunting dress, with all its appurtenances, which suited Felix admirably. When he was dressed the huntsman was about to throw the Countess's clothes into a corner of the hut, but Felix would not allow this ; he folded them into a compact bundle, and announced that he would beg the Countess to give them to him, in order that he might keep them all his life in memory of this wonderful day.

At last the captain came back. He was fully armed, and brought the huntsman his gun, of which he had been deprived, and a powder-horn. He also handed

the student a musket, and presented Felix with a dagger, which he begged him to gird on in case of danger. It was lucky for the three prisoners that it was very dark, for the beaming look with which Felix received this weapon, might well have betrayed his identity to the brigand. When they had cautiously left the hut, the huntsman noticed that the customary sentry was not at his post near the door; it would, therefore, have been possible to slip past the hut unobserved. The captain, however, did not take the ordinary path, which led up out of the gorge into the forest, but advanced towards a rock which appeared absolutely perpendicular and utterly inaccessible. When they reached it, however, the captain drew their attention to a rope ladder which was lashed to the rock. He threw his gun over his shoulder, and began to climb up; then he called to the Countess to follow, and stretched down a hand to help her; the huntsman clambered up last. A footpath was revealed behind this rock, which they followed at a smart pace.

"This footpath," said the captain, "runs into the Aschaffenburg road. We will betake ourselves thither, for I have been accurately informed that your husband, the Count, is making a halt there at this moment."

They walked on in silence, the brigand always ahead, and the three others close at his heels. After three hours they stopped, and the captain advised Felix to sit down and rest on a tree trunk. He produced some bread and a flask of old wine, which he offered to his weary companions. "I expect, before another hour, we shall strike the line which the military authorities have posted right across the forest. In this case I beg you to speak to whoever is in command of these soldiers, and ask him to treat me with consideration."

Felix agreed to do this, although he could hope for small results from his mediation. They rested for another half-hour, and then set out once more. They had possibly walked for almost another hour, and were already close to the high road; the sun had begun to rise, and the dawn had penetrated into the forest, when their march was suddenly arrested by a loud "Halt! Stand!" They stopped, and five soldiers advanced towards them, and informed them that they must be conducted before the major in command in order to account for their journey. When they had proceeded some fifty paces, they became aware of the gleam of arms in the underwood to the right and to the left of them; the forest seemed to be occupied by a large regiment. The major was sitting under an oak with several officers and some other men. The prisoners were brought before him, and he was just about to question them as to "whence and whither," when one of the men jumped up, exclaiming: "My God! what do I see? That must be Godfrey, our huntsman!" "Yes, indeed, Lord Justice," answered the huntsman in a joyful tone; "here I am, rescued in the most marvellous manner from the hands of these rogues."

The officers were astonished to find him here, but the huntsman begged the magistrate and the major to step aside with him one instant, and in a few words he told them how they had been saved, and who the third man was who was with him, and the young goldsmith.

Filled with joy at this news, the major gave orders that this important prisoner should be led away. He then took the young goldsmith up to his fellow-officers, and introduced him as the heroic lad who had saved the Countess by his courage and presence of mind, and they all shook Felix heartily by the hand, and congratulated

him, nor were they ever weary of hearing the account which he and the huntsman gave of their adventures.

Meanwhile it had become broad daylight. The major resolved himself to accompany Felix as far as the town. He and the magistrate, therefore, started off with the goldsmith and his friends for the Countess's home. In the next village there was a carriage awaiting them in which Felix had to take a seat at the major's side, and in this manner, with the huntsman, the student, the magistrate, and a crowd of other people riding behind them and in front of them, they entered the town in triumph.

The story of the attack on the forest tavern and of the young goldsmith's sacrifice, had spread like wild-fire through the whole neighbourhood, and the rumour of his rescue flew with quite as much speed from mouth to mouth. It was, therefore, no wonder that when they reached the town, they found the streets crowded with people, who all wished to see the young hero. Everyone pressed forward as the carriage drove in at a slow pace. "That is he," they cried; "do you see him there in the carriage next to the officer? Long live the brave goldsmith's 'prentice!" and a loud "Hurrah!" resounded through the air from a thousand voices.

Felix was covered with confusion at the sight of the noisy crowd, and was much touched by his reception. But an even more moving sight met him at the town hall. A middle-aged man, richly attired, received him with open arms on the steps, exclaiming, with tears in his eyes: "How can I ever repay you, my son? You gave me all just when I was about to lose all. You have saved my wife, and my children have to thank you for their mother's life, for her fragile constitution could never have borne the horrors of such a captivity." It

was the Countess's husband who uttered these words. The more reluctant Felix appeared to receive any reward for his self-sacrifice, the more determinedly did the Count adhere to his resolve. Then the unhappy fate of the brigand chief suddenly flashed across the lad's mind; he related how the latter had rescued them, and how their escape had really been planned for the Countess's sake. The Count, who was more touched by this fresh proof of the noble disinterestedness that Felix displayed by his choice of a reward, than by the captain's action, promised to do his best to save the brigand.

On that very day, the Count, accompanied by the valiant huntsman, took the young goldsmith back to his castle, where the Countess was still waiting in great anxiety for news of the young goldsmith who had sacrificed himself in her stead. Who can describe her joy as her husband entered the room leading her deliverer by the hand? There was no end to her questions and her thanks. She sent for her children, and showed them the gallant youth to whom their mother owed so much. The little ones clasped his hands, and the sweet baby way in which they lisped their thanks, assuring him that, after their father and mother, they would love him better than anyone in the world, was ample compensation to him for his many woes and for the sleepless nights he had spent in the brigands' hut.

When the first moments of the happy meeting were over, the Countess made a sign to a servant, who left the room, but soon returned with the clothes and the well-known knapsack which Felix had confided to her care in the forest tavern. "It is all here," she said with a kind smile, "all that you gave me in that awful moment; the charm which you hung round me to strike

my pursuers with blindness. It is now once more at your service ; but I want to suggest to you that you should leave me these clothes, which I should like to keep in memory of you, and take in exchange the sum of money which the brigands demanded as my ransom."

Felix recoiled at the generosity of this present ; his noble heart could not welcome the thought of receiving a reward for that which he had done of his own free will. "Gracious Countess," he said with emotion, "I cannot agree to this. You shall have the clothes, as you desire them, but the sum of money which you mentioned I cannot accept. As I know, however, that you would wish to reward me in some way, let me retain your good will instead of any recompense, and if I should ever be in a condition to require your help, you may be sure that I shall ask you for it." The young man was again besieged by many arguments, but nothing could make him change his mind. At length the Countess and her husband gave in, and the servant was about to remove the clothes and the knapsack when Felix suddenly remembered the jewellery, which, in the agitation of so many happy scenes, he had absolutely forgotten.

"Stop!" he cried. "You must just let me take one more thing out of my knapsack, my lady, and the rest shall be absolutely and entirely yours."

"Take what you want," she said, "although I should like to keep everything in memory of you, but take anything which you feel you cannot spare. But, if I may ask, what is it you care for so much that you will not leave it for me?"

While the Countess was speaking, the lad had opened his knapsack and taken out a red morocco case. "You can have anything that is mine," he said, with a smile, "but this belongs to my dear lady godmother ; I

did it all myself, and must take it to her. It is a piece of jewellery, gracious lady," he continued, opening the case and handing it to her—"a piece of jewellery on which I have tested my own skill."

She took the little case, but had hardly glanced at it when she started with amazement.

"What! These stones!" she exclaimed. "You say they are for your godmother?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Felix; "my lady godmother sent me the stones, which I have set, and am now about to take them to her myself."

The Countess looked at him with emotion; tears filled her eyes. "So you are Felix Perner from Nuremberg!" she exclaimed.

"Of course; but how did you find out my name so quickly?" asked the lad, looking at her in perplexity.

"What a wonderful dispensation of Providence!" she remarked with feeling to her astonished husband. "This is Felix, my godchild, the son of our maid Sabine. Felix, I it is to whom you wish to go, so you have saved your godmother's life without knowing it."

"What! Are you Countess Sandan, who did so much for me and my mother? And is this Castle Marienburg, for which I was making? How thankful I am for the good fortune which made me meet you by such a wonderful chance, and which gave me the opportunity to prove to you, although only very inadequately, the gratitude I feel."

"You have done more for me," she answered, "than I could ever have done for you, and as long as I live it will be my endeavour to show you how inestimably much we all owe you. My husband shall be your father, my children your brothers and sisters, and I your

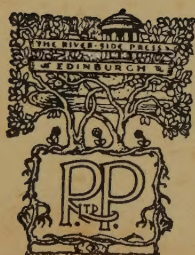
mother ; this ornament, which brought you to me in an hour of sore need, shall be my most treasured piece of jewellery, for it will always remind me of you and your heroism."

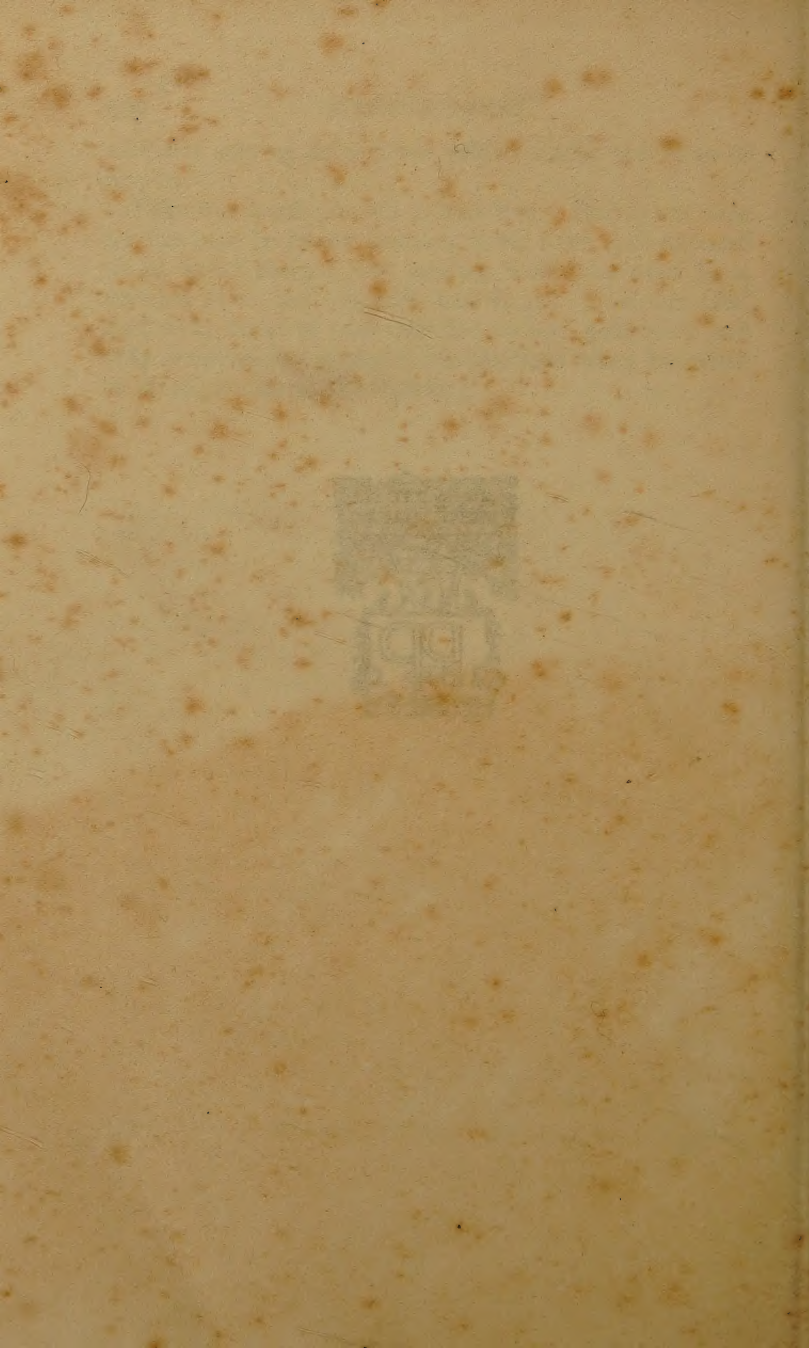
Thus spake the Countess, and she kept her word. She generously supplied the lucky Felix with all the funds for his travels. When he returned, a skilled workman at his craft, she bought him a house in Nuremberg, which she entirely furnished for him, and his sitting-rooms were decorated with beautiful paintings, representing some of the episodes in the tavern, and in the brigands' camp.

There Felix lived in the capacity of a skilled goldsmith, and the fame of his art being added to the wonderful reports of his heroic courage, soon procured him customers throughout the whole kingdom. Many strangers, passing through the beautiful town of Nuremberg, asked their way to the workshop of the famous craftmaster Felix in order to see him and admire his work, and few left his shop without ordering some beautiful ornament. His most welcome visitors, however, were the huntsman, the compass-maker, the student, and the carter. Whenever the latter was driving from Wurzburg to Fürth he dropped in to have a chat with Felix ; the huntsman brought almost every year presents from the Countess ; and the compass-maker, after wandering about the globe, eventually came and settled near Felix, the craftmaster. One day they had a visit from the student. He had now become an important man in the State, but was never ashamed to sit down to supper with Felix and the compass-maker. They would recall all the events in the forest tavern, and the student told them how he had seen the brigand chief again in Italy : he had entirely turned over a new leaf,

and was serving as a brave soldier under the King of Naples.

Felix was much pleased to hear this. Had it not been for this man he might, perhaps, never have been exposed to so great danger, but neither would he ever have escaped from the brigands had it not been for him. And so it came to pass that the valiant goldsmith had only peaceful and pleasant recollections when he called to mind the inn in the Spessart.







 KU-210-647